The Marker Lamp

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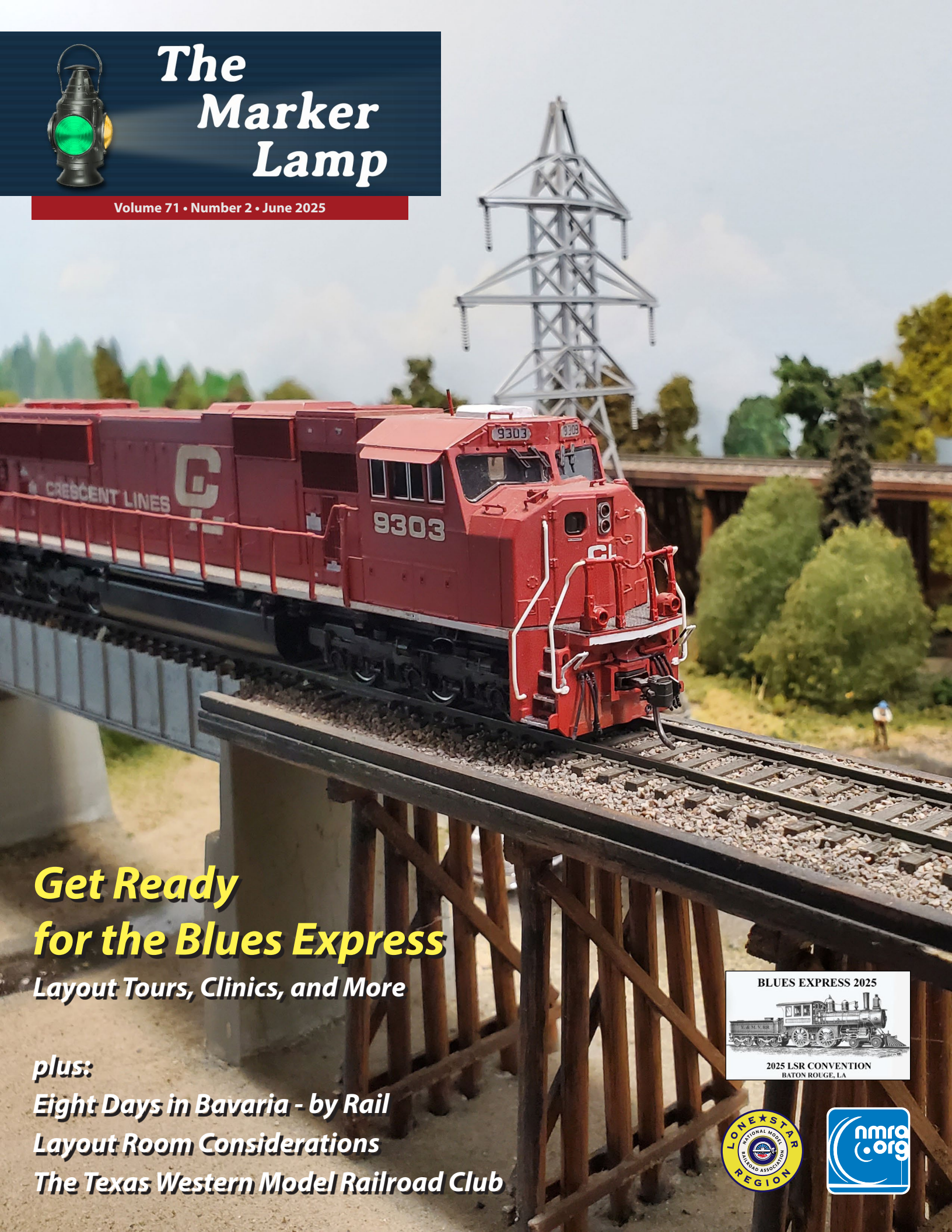

Get Ready for the Blues Express

Layout Tours, Clinics, and More

plus:

Eight Days in Bavaria - by Rail

Layout Room Considerations

The Texas Western Model Railroad Club

The Marker Lamp

The Official Publication of
The Lone Star Region of the
National Model Railroad
Association

Volume 71, Number 2
June 2025

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The editorial policy of The Marker Lamp, the official publication of The Lone Star Region, shall be to contribute, wherever possible, to the promotion, growth and understanding of the hobby of Model Railroading, within the confines of good taste and responsibility. The Marker Lamp is published once each quarter by and for the members of The Lone Star Region of The National Model Railroad Association. Articles appearing in The Marker Lamp are the opinions of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the position or policies of the officers or membership of The Lone Star Region or The National Model Railroad Association.

Address all correspondence, news, photos and drawings to the editor. All material will be gladly accepted and will be used depending on the availability of space and suitability of material. None will be returned unless a stamped, self-addressed envelope is provided. Correspondence relating to Pike Ads and Dealer Ads should be addressed to Steve Sandifer steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net

Cover photos are from the Crescent City Model Railroad Club (The Crescent Lines) Featured on the Blues Express 2025 (Photos provided by Matthew Lacrouts)

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President's Message

by Donna Orr
donnalorrtx@gmail.com

A Busy Four Years

Wow, how fast have these past four years gone by. As I write this, my last report as President, I want to thank our Board of Directors for all the work they have been doing over these past four years, and for all the support.

Many of you do not realize how much work your Board puts into the LSR Region. They have lived through COVID, Zoom meetings, and then back to in person meetings. The constitution and bylaws have been updated to assure that we are compliant with current 501(c)(3) rules and regulations. The contest rules for the regional conventions have been revised and detailed. The convention guidelines have been updated. Board positions have been more defined. We have a free Google Drive where we can store, share and back up all LSR information, a LSR convention website is being built so that each year it can be reused and not have to be reinvented for each regional convention. We also now have a membership directory and a comprehensive ad policy for the Marker Lamp.

You say – so? Well, each of these areas took many hours of work and research and refining to arrive at the final results. And did I mention the start of the Virtual Museum? We will have an easily accessed online museum for the history of the LSR. We also have commitments for regional conventions through 2029 and maybe through 2030.

Also in these 4 years, we've seen a new special interest group form – Women in Model Railroading, and we lived through the 2023 National Convention, which was one of the best.

I look forward to being the Board Advisor and welcome our new President, Bob Barnett. Bob, I tried to complete our projects as to not leave anything for you to clean up so you can move forward with your vision for our region.

Now I may have time to finish my AP's and achieve my MMR. Signing off for now. Happy model railroading!

Donna **ML**

From the Editor

by Peter Kazmir
peter@centexnmra.org

Convention Time is Here!

I'm sure some of you are sick and tired of hearing about the *Blues Express* by now since we've been covering it (and the LSR has been sending emails about it) for almost a year now. Well, if you are, you're in luck! Convention time is apon us. Later this week, as I type this, I'll be heading to Baton Rouge to partake in this year's event.

I'm especially looking forward to the convention this year because a) I grew up in Baton Rouge (but haven't lived there since the 90's), and b) I've never attended an LSR convention in Louisiana, so there will be a lot of new things to see and experience plus a lot of opportunity to visit old friends I haven't seen in a while.

However, I know the vast majority of LSR members never attend one of our conventions. For some of you it's just not possible due to cost or time conflicts. Unfortunately, there's not much the LSR can do about either one - hotels are expensive, even though we try to find less expensive options, and there's just no time that is perfect for everyone. Plus most of us work, and finding time off can be difficult. I get it. Even I don't go to every convention.

But I emplore you all, if you like being amongst others who like the same thing you do, and if you can go, then try to go, at least once. The clinics, the layout tours, the prototype tours -- where else can you get those things? Train shows sometimes have some of those things, but conventions are where it's at.

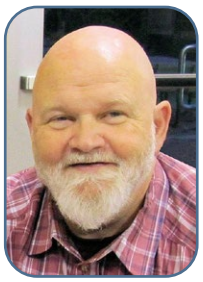
If there's something the LSR could do to improve the convention experience, please share it with us. Tell your division director, or Joe Leising (the LSR Convention Chair). We're all ears. Just remember there's some things we can't realistically do, like make hotels free.

I hope to see you at the Blues Express!

And if not, I hope to see you at Connections 2026, *next* year's convention, which will be held in Austin, Texas. We (I'm on the committee) are already cooking up a fantastic agenda!

Until then, keep the fun in Model Railroading! **ML**

Up the Tracks Events Calendar



by Bill Dryden
LSR Events Chair

Here are upcoming events within the LSR of which I am aware. I will provide all the information YOU send me or I can glean from other publications, websites, etc., for these events. Additional information may be available through the *NMRA Magazine* and/or various trade magazines or various websites. Also, note that all show times and dates are at the discretion of the sponsoring organization and are subject to change. Please forward any and all information about upcoming events or activities in your area, club, etc., to me, via e-mail at bdr149@airmail.net.

The Blues Express
2025 Lone Star Region NMRA Convention
June 26 - 29, 2025
Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South
9900 Airline Highway
Baton Rouge, LA 70816
Register Today - It's Not Too Late!
https://bluesexpress2025.com

EVENTS AND SHOWS

June

24th – 28th — *(Lubbock, TX)* **3rd Annual Summer Model Train Show at the American Windmill Museum** (Sponsored by the American Windmill Museum and the Lubbock Model Railroad Association). 10:00 am - 5:00 pm daily, Tues. June 24 - Sat. June 28. Admission is $5 per person, with kids 2 and under and AWM members getting in for free. American Windmill Museum, 1701 Canyon Lake Dr, Lubbock, TX. More information: https://lmra806.wordpress.com/ or https://windmill.com/event/2025-summer-model-train-show/.

August

23rd – 24th — *(Austin, TX)* **Austin Train Show** (Sponsored by the Austin Model Railway Society). Sat. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission $8 in advance – $10 at the door, Children 12 and under FREE with adult. Admission includes both days Palmer Events Center, 900 Barton Springs Road, Austin, TX. More information: https://austintrainshow.org/.

31st – 1st — *(Weatherford, TX)* **Clark Gardens Model Train Show**. Sat. 8:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults $10, Seniors $8, Children 4 – 12 $5, Children 3 and under Free, Clark Gardens Members Free. Clark Gardens, 567 Maddux Road, Weatherford, TX. For more information: info@clarkgardens.org or https://www.clarkgardens.org/happenings/model-train-show.html or (940) 682-4856.

September

20th – 21st *(Temple, TX)* **43rd Annual Temple Model Train & RPM Show** (Sponsored by Central Texas Area Model Railroaders [CentraMOD]). Sat. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults $10, $1 discount for seniors and active duty military and dependents with ID, 12 and under Free. Frank Mayborn Center, 3303 N. 3rd Street, Temple, TX. More information: http://centramodrr.com/train-show/.

27th – 28th *(Dallas/Plano, TX)* **Fall Plano Train Show** (Sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs). Sat. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults $10, Children 12 and under Free (w/Adult Admission). Plano Event Center, 2000 E Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, TX. More information: https://www.dfwtrainshows.com/.

October

4th *(Galveston/Texas City, TX)* **GCMRRC Annual Train Festival** (Sponsored by the Galveston County Model Railroad Club). Sat. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Texas City Museum, 409 6th Street, Texas City, TX. More information: http://www.gcmrrc.org/coming-events.html.

November

15th – 16th *(Houston/Pearland, TX)* **2025 Houston Area Model Train Show** (Sponsored by the Houston Area T-Trak Association, Inc.). Sat. 10:00 am – 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults $7, 17 & Under Free. Knights of Columbus Hall, 2320 Hatfield Road, Pearland, TX. More information: https://houstonttrak.org/show/.

December

6th & 7th, 13th & 14th, 20th & 21st *(San Antonio, TX)* **Santa's Railroad Wonderland** (Sponsored by the Texas Transportation Museum). Open 5:30 pm – 9:00 pm (parking opens at 5:15 pm, last admission at 8:00 pm). Santa's Railroad Wonderland is an extravaganza of Christmas joy. Every area of the museum is decorated, from the historic depot, the trains, the garden railroad, the 4 other scale model railroad layouts and everything else in between. Grab some hot chocolate and snacks then take a stroll through the garden railroad or take your snacks on board the train and head to Wallaceville where some elves have taken over while Santa is making a special stop at the TTM. (And as always, snow is in the forecast.) Adults $12, Kids 4-12 $10, Kids under 4 free. Group rates available and parking is free. Texas Transportation Museum, 11731 Wetmore Road, San Antonio, TX. More information: https://www.txtransportationmuseum.org/annualevents.

January 2026

17th – 18th *(Dallas/Plano, TX)* **Winter Plano Train Show** (Sponsored by the North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs). Sat. 10:00 am to 5:00 pm, Sun. 10:00 am to 4:00 pm. Adults $11, Children 12 and under Free (w/Adult Admission); cash and credit cards accepted at the door. $1 discount for cash. Plano Event Center, 2000 E Spring Creek Parkway, Plano, TX. More information: https://www.dfwtrainshows.com/.

RECURRING EVENTS AND MEETINGS

LSR Division 1 – Cowcatcher Division – Fort Worth, TX
The Cowcatcher Division meets on the 2nd Saturday of each month at the Texas Western Model Railroad Club, 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. You can attend in person or via Zoom. For more information regarding the Cowcatcher Division or its programs, check their website: https://www.cowcatcherdivision.org.

LSR Division 2 - Bayou Division – Baton Rouge/New Orleans, LA
The Bayou Division meets quarterly at different locations. For information on future meetings contact Rod Fredericks at fredericks.rod@gmail.com.

LSR Division 3 - Trinity River Division – Allen, TX
The Trinity River Division meets at 10:00 am on the 3rd Saturday of every month at the Christ Servant Lutheran Church, Allen Texas. Occasionally things change due to scheduling conflicts so pay close attention to the email meeting notices that go out a week before the meeting. If you would like to be added to the email list contact Robert Secrest at Robert.Secrest@hotmail.com.

LSR Division 4 – Cen-Tex Division – Austin, TX
The Cen-Tex Division meets bi-monthly at the Austin Northwest Recreational Center, 2913 Northland Drive, Austin, TX. Meetings are held at 10:00 am on the 2nd Saturday of the *odd* months and include clinics, show-and-tell, DCC minute, social activities and a layout open house. For more information about upcoming meetings, see https://centexnmra.org or contact director@centexnmra.org to be added to the mail list.

LSR Division 5 - West Texas Division
Division 5 holds their meetings virtually on Zoom on the 3rd Monday of each month starting at 7:00 pm. Anyone that can join via Zoom is welcome to attend. Use this link to sign up for the division's monthly bulletin and keep up with events and happenings in the division: http://eepurl.com/hRLLm9 or email Headroadie2004@gmail.com.

LSR Division 6 – South Texas Division – San Antonio, TX
The South Texas Division hosts quarterly meeetings at the Longhorn Cafe at 12311 Nacogdoches Road in San Antonio. Please come out and join us for clinics, show-and-tell, tip and tricks, and the ever-popular Deal-or-Duds, along with great fellowship. For more information contact Roy Kaiser at fr8train@gvtc.com.

LSR Division 8 - Texas Gulf Division – Houston, TX
The Texas Gulf Division meets the 2nd Saturday of the *odd* months from 10:00 am to 12 Noon at the Trini Mendenhall Community Center, 1414 Wirt Road, Houston, TX 77055. For more information contact Phil Stewart at pstewart1225@yahoo.com.

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Alamo Model Railroad Engineers - San Antonio, TX
The Alamo Model Railroad Engineers meets the 2nd Friday of the month at 7:30 pm in the Zucht Building at the Texas Transportation Museum, 11791 Wetmore Rd., San Antonio TX. For more information call (210) 490-3554 (weekends 9:00 am to 4:00 pm; voicemail only M-F) or visit the website at https://www.txtransportationmuseum.org/ho-scale-indoor-model-railroad.

All Points Model Railroad Association - Conroe, TX
The All Points North Model Railroad Association is open to new members and has business meetings in their clubhouse on the 3rd Saturday of the month at 10:30 am. For more information, including a calendar of activities, please visit their website at http://apnmrr.org/.

Austin Model Railway Society - Austin, TX
The Austin Model Railway Society is a HO scale modular group that is open to new members and meets once a month. For more information please email Steve Jackobs at president@austinrailway.org or visit the web site www.austinrailway.org. Be sure to join us in December for our annual open house at Breakfast with Santa!

The Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders - Jackson, LA
Our mission: to educate and inform the public on the hobby of model railroading, associated disciplines, and to entertain both children and adults through our numerous displays featuring both model trains, real railroads and railroad safety. The Trains run from 10:00 a.m. until 2:00 p.m. on the 2nd and 4th Saturdays of every month! THE PUBLIC IS INVITED! Located at the Republic of West Florida Historical Museum, 3406 College St, Jackson, LA. More information: http://www.greaterbrrailroaders.com/.

Houston Area "G" Gaugers - Rosenberg, TX
The Houston Area "G" Gaugers (HAGG) model train club meets at the Rosenberg Railroad Museum on the 4th Sunday of each month to run their special trains on the tracks of the Garden Railroad Exhibit. The museum also hosts fun seasonal activities for the kids on this day. Steam engines, circus trains, patriotic trains or everyone's favorite Thomas? You never know what trains you'll see. Rosenberg Railroad Museum, 1921 Avenue F, Rosenberg, TX. More information: info@RosenbergRRMuseum.org.

Houston Area Live Steamers - Hockley, TX
HALS has over 9,000 feet of track for you to enjoy and ride on most any Saturday of the year. Someone is usually there every Saturday with special run, operations, waybills/timetable, work and fun run days scheduled throughout the year. Our public run days are the 3rd Saturday of the month March through November. Come see our 2,500 foot expansion in Phase 4. Model Railroaders (any scale) are welcome to attend most any time. Check our web site out at www.hals.org for schedule of events or e-mail Rick White at rick.white.jr@gmail.com for more information.

New Braunfels Railroad Museum - New Braunfels, TX
Kids Fun Day is held on the 1st and 3rd Saturday of each month, 10:00 am to 2:00 pm at the New Braunfels Railroad Museum, 302 South San Antonio Street (in the 1907 Restored Railroad Depot), New Braunfels, TX. Museum phone (830) 627-2447. Kids of all ages will have the opportunity to run model trains and become a Jr. Engineer. Also among the displays at the Kids Fun Day will be a large US Army Model Garden (G) Scale and Lego Trains. Visit our Steam Engine, Caboose, Dining Car (available for Birthday Parties) and Box Car. There will be other fun, train related activities, additional model trains, train artifacts, our 1907 depot are on display. The Railroad Museum opens at 10:00 am on Saturdays. For field trip scheduling and more information, call Susan Riordon (210) 542-6121, or visit us at www.nbrrm.org.

North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs – Irving, TX
The North Texas Council of Railroad Clubs (NTC) meets the 3rd Tuesday of the month. Visit the website www.dfwtrainshows.com for more information about the NTC, its meeting site, member clubs or sponsored events.

San Antonio Model Railroad Association - San Antonio, TX
The San Antonio Model Railroad Association, SAMRA, is open to new members and meets on the 2nd Friday of each month at 7:30 pm in the Bob Clarke Rail Heritage Museum, 7702 Narrow Pass, Live Oak, TX. Please visit our website www.samratx.org for information about our activities and their dates and times. Also, like us on Facebook.

Texas Northern Model Railroad Club – Dallas, TX (North)
The Texas Northern Model Railroad Club business meeting is the 1st Thursday of the month and has regular meetings on Thursday evenings and most Saturdays. If you like to operate, come by on Tuesday nights to join our weekly operation session. Located in North Dallas at 11999 Plano Road., Suite 154, Dallas, TX 75243. For more information: www.texasnorthern.org.

Texas Western Model Railroad Club – Forest Hills, TX
The Texas Western Model Railroad Club meets for its business meeting every 1st Thursday of the month at 7:00 pm. The Club is located at 6808 Forest Hills Drive, Forest Hills, TX. For more information: (682) 587-2092 or www.twmrc.org.

EXCURSION TRAIN TRIPS

Austin Steam Train; Cedar Park, TX; (512) 477-8468; www.austinsteamtrain.org

Grapevine Vintage Railroad; Grapevine, TX; (817) 410-3185; www.gvrr.com

Old Hickory Railroad; Jackson, LA; (225) 634-7397; www.louisianasteamtrain.com

Texas State Railroad; Palestine & Rusk, TX; (888) 987-2461; www.texasstaterr.com

Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event. Column submission deadlines are the 15th of February, May, August, and November. Publication of the *Marker Lamp* is the following month. **ML**

Whose track goes there?

Can you figure out whose layout this photo is from? If you are the first person to email the correct answer to rrrduino@huntatrophy.com you'll win a campfire lighting Arduino!

The photo in the March issue was of the Rock Island Lines by Michael Armstrong.

Convention Layout Tours

by Rod Fredericks
2025 LSR Convention Chair

There will be three individual layouts and two clubs (with multiple layouts) open to visit during the Blues Express, including the Greater Baton Rouge Model Railroaders (see the September 2024 *Marker Lamp* for details), the Crescent City Model Railroad Club. (Additional layouts are open for operating sessions.) More information can be found on the Blues Express website. *Times subject to change. Any changes and other pertinent data will be available at registration.*

Covington Layout Tour
June 27 and 28

A self-drive layout tour has been arranged to visit layouts in the Covington, LA area. (Covington is apx. 75 minutes east of the Holiday Inn on I-12.) Three layouts will be open for viewing:

Matt Hardey's New Orleans Great Northern (red marker on map) will be open from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon both days. He is located at 1027 W. 11th Avenue in Covington.

Mike Waldorf's L&N MNO&P Division (green marker on map) will be open from 9:00 am to 12:00 noon both days. He is also hosting operating sessions. He is located at 109 Golfview Lane in Convington.

Walter Rieger's Southern Rathole Division, 1981 (purple marker on map) will be open from 1:00 to 3:00 pm both days. He is located at 19620 Sunshine Avenue in Covington.

There are also some railfanning opportunities in Hammond, between Baton Rouge and Covington. See the September 2024 *Marker Lamp* for details.

Scenes from Matt Hardley's New Orleans Great Northern

More from Matt Hardley's New Orleans Great Northern

Scenes from Mike Waldorf's L&N MNO&P Division

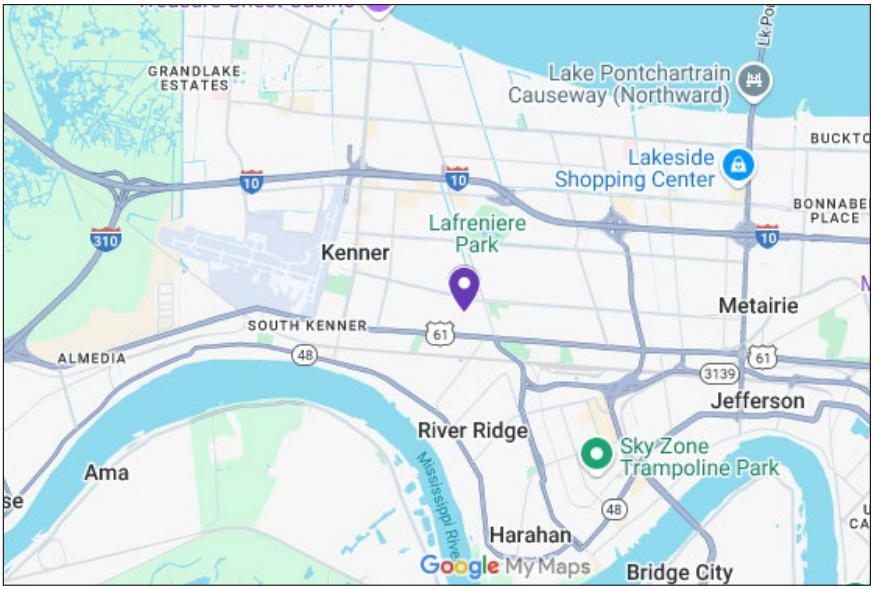
Scenes from Walt Rieger's Southern Rathole Division, 1981

Crescent City Model Railroad Club
June 27

The Crescent City Model Railroad Club (purple marker on map) is located at 601 N. Lester Avenue in Metairie. This is about an 80 minute drive from the hotel down I-10, or about 45 minutes across the Lake Pontchartrain Causeway (a toll bridge) from Covington.

Started in 1960, the CCMRC is the oldest model railroad club in Division 2. It models the fictitious Crecent Lines in Southeastern Louisiana. More details about the layout are in the December 2024 *Marker Lamp* and on their website, CCMRC.com.

The club will be open on Friday June 27 from 9:00 am until 1:00pm. Questions can be directed to the club at crescentcitymodelrrclub@gmail.com or (504) 737-3723. **ML**



Scenes from the Crescent City Model Railroad Club

3D Computer Aided Design and Model Railroading

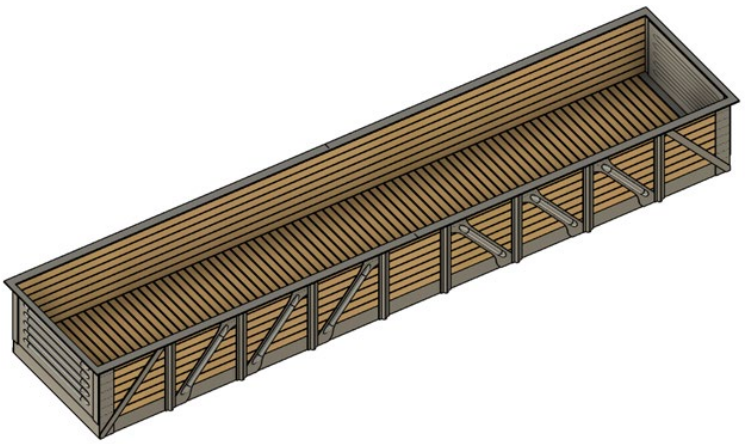
by Eric Smith

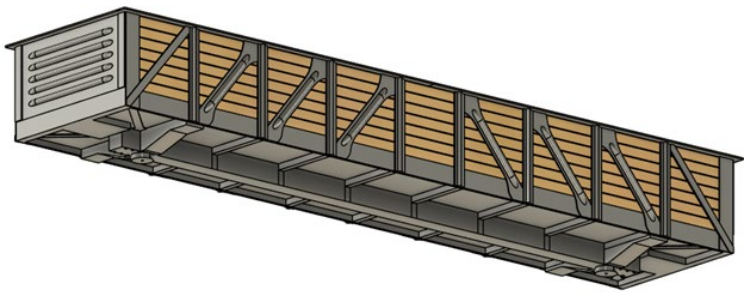
Have you ever looked at something in the real world and asked yourself: How can I get that on my layout? Or how can I model that and make it look prototypical?

An answer for questions like these may lie in the 3D Computer Aided Design (CAD) and 3D printing world. You might have purchased a cheap 3D printer or have a friend that has one, but you don't have the know-how or expertise to make this happen. Well, I have an answer for you!

The Blues Express

Yes, the Blues Express 2025 LSR convention. I will be teaching a class on this exact subject at the convention. It is a 4-hour class that requires you to bring your laptop (hopefully a newer version) and learn the fundamentals of using Autodesk's Fusion CAD software. In this class I will show you the basics of how to use the package by going through the menus and commands to build a couple of 3D objects that can be printed 3D. The focus of the class will be to draw in the CAD package an HO scale composite wood-steel gondola as seen in the pictures below. (The gondola can be printed in any scale.)





The prototype for this car is the USRA Composite Gondola used by many railroads:

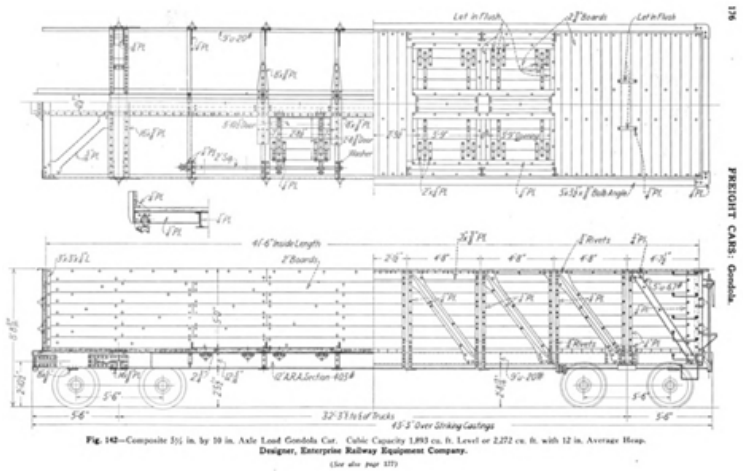


Fig. 142—Composite 3½ in. by 10 in. Axle Load Gondola Car. Cubic Capacity 1,893 cu. ft. Level or 2,272 cu. ft. with 12 in. Average Heap.
Designer, Enterprise Railway Equipment Company.

So, who am I and why do I want to teach you to build your own model railroad 3D drawings?

Good question. By now you have seen many emails and articles from Eric Smith about the Blues Express. Articles and emails concerning the clinics, the food, places to visit and things to do in and around Baton Rouge.

There are three Eric Smiths I can name right off the top of my head related to Model Railroading: One is in LD Sig, One is the head of Micro Trains, and then there is me. I am a retired 3D software engineer with over 35 yrs. of experience specializing in graphical programming in the 3D arenas. I've worked on aerospace flight displays, 3D terrain, medical 3D imaging, cellular phone graphics and was granted a patent for what is now called synthetic vision systems, 3D terrain displayed in real-time in a moving vehicle.

However, I've been a Model Railroader since age 7 and collecting N scale since 1985. As such, I've had multiple N scale layouts throughout the years and built just about everyone's N scale plastic or resin kits. When my kids were young and in school, they would sit at the kitchen table every night doing their homework while I sit at the same table building kits. With a cutting mat underneath of course. After years of building the kits, and amassing quite a collection, I began plotting and scheming where to put them on my layout. I wanted them to make sense and so I went to almost every train show that had layout tours I could get to at the time to see how others arranged scenes and buildings. To my amazement everyone had the same buildings. Painted and grouped the same way I was wanting to put them. They had the Walthers's corner stone kits, the DPM kits, the Model Power and Bachmann kits. I decided I wanted to have something different.

As part of my layout building/design, I got permission from the CFO to get a 3D printer to download and print N Ssale items I found online. I did this, a lot, and then said to myself: Hey, you're a 3D software engineer! You can design and print your own buildings, so they won't be like everyone else's buildings. So, I searched around and found I had taken pictures of many interesting buildings through the years, and I used Google Earth Street View to give me new and updated images of the buildings. I started designing and printing kits for my own use that resembled DPM kits: four walls and a piece of styrene for the roof, with some square rod styrene to make sure the sides stayed square. The nice part of it all was that my buildings actually exist as prototypical buildings.

Once I got several of them done, I started to say (once again to myself): what if other people were tired of the same buildings and might want a change?

In 2018 I started a company, Scale Railroad Models (https://scalerrmodels.com), to sell those designs in HO, N and Z scale. I have about 25 different building designs with more in the queue to be drawn up. To date, I've sold about 2000 of these kits worldwide.

If this is what my company does, why teach others how to do it?

With the proliferation of 3D printers into the home/consumer market, it's becoming more apparent that more and more content/3D files will become available free to the public. Artificial Intelligence (AI) will probably make it in a few years when a person can ask for a 3D printable file of a specific building just by giving a street address. The writing is on the wall that the days of designing and selling 3D printed buildings are limited, but the 3D printing of buildings and other model railroad objects are not! So, I say: Teach the masses! More content/3D printable files will then be available for everyone.

Sign up for my class and come to Baton Rouge, I'd love to meet you and have a chance to teach the basics of Fusion to you. I have a workbook that will take you through the basics of making the Gondola in HO. I'll also be sharing some of the tips and tricks for using the same software to build buildings and other Model Railroading objects for your layout. **ML**

Non-Rail Activities at the Blues Express

by Joe Leising

A fun and informative series of activities await you with the non-rail program at the Blues Express 2025 Lone Star Region Convention. Fun and games, artistic creations and sightseeing are just are part of the exciting activities.

Starting on Thursday evening, meet with old friends and make new ones in the Sierra meeting room, designated for all of the non-rail on-site activities. Then let your creative energy flow with the pine cone Christmas ornament and modpodge design jewelry box projects. Hone your pine cones skills now, and get ready to share them with family members when the holiday season is here.

Friday morning you can continue with your arts & crafts projects, or take the opportunity for a field trip to the Louisiana State Capitol and the Old Louisiana State Capitol buildings. Starting at the Louisiana State Capitol, you are greeted by a staircase that has an engraved list of each of the 50 states on each of the forty-nine steps, starting with the first state that entered the Union, ending with Alaska and Hawaii sharing the final step since Hawaii joined the Union after the building was constructed. (A ramp is also available if you do not want to walk up the stairs.) You then enter the tallest capitol building in the country at 450 feet tall with a beautiful art deco design, into the two-story memorial hall. The floor of memorial hall is made from lava from Mount Vesuvius in Italy, and two large solid bronze chandeliers adorn the ceiling above. In the center of the floor is a map depicting the sixty-four parishes (counties) in Louisiana, with symbols of the major industries and Louisiana's natural products. Each side wall has a beautiful mural, the "Goddess of Knowledge and Time" with the central figure holding a zodiac and hourglass, with harvest scenes in the background and the "Abundance of the Earth" with the center figure representing agriculture, surrounded by representations of art, literature and music. Past the murals are the chambers for the State House of Representatives and Senate.

Passing through the solid bronze elevator's doors, with the ten different flags that have flown in Louisiana overhead, a quick elevator ride takes you to the observation deck on the 27th floor, where you experience a breathtaking panoramic birds-eye view of the entire city of Baton Rouge, the industrial section, the Governor's Mansion, Baton Rouge Arsenal Museum, Louisiana State University and the mighty Mississippi River.

A one-mile drive into downtown Baton Rouge takes you to the Old Louisiana State Capitol, often referred to as Baton Rouge's castle, with a stained-glass dome and unique gothic style architecture. After a fire set ablaze by Union troops during the Civil War, the current structure was renovated in 1884. The building now serves as an educational history museum.

Thursday afternoon is free time to continue to visit the many attractions in Baton Rouge, or spend time in the non-rail room playing games, working on puzzles, and enjoying each other's company.

Other points of interest in Baton Rouge include the Old Arsenal Museum, Pentagon Barracks Museum, Capitol Parks Museum, Mike the Tiger Habitat, Magnolia Mound Museum, Baton Rouge Zoo, Old Governor's Mansion, LSU AgCenter Botanical Gardens, Blue Zone Aquarium, Bluebonnet Swamp Nature Center, and Louisiana Arts & Science Museum.

Friday evening starts with playing bingo with the chance to win prizes. More time will be set aside to work on your arts & crafts projects, and Friday evening will end with Lone Star Region Non-Rail Chair Divina Gato-Hogno taking off her "fun hat" and putting on her "professional hat". Divina is a Nurse Practitioner with credentials of Master of Science Nursing, Advanced Practice Registered Nurse, and Family Nurse Practitioner–Certified. Divina will open the floor with an opportunity to ask your medical questions. No appointment or insurance is needed.

Creative projects will continue on Saturday morning with bracelet and necklace making.

Saturday afternoon is set aside to learn how to play poker - from poker professionals that have participated in national poker tournaments (and have even been sponsored due to their high skill level and success). Linda and Bridget Fredericks will share both the basics and inside tips to the art of playing poker so you can become a poker force to be reconned with.

And don't forget that the Lone Star Region Contest Room has a special Arts & Craft category where you can display your original expression of creativeness, including but not limited to knitting, crocheting, painting, pottery, quilting, embroidery, scrapbooking - basically anything considered crafty. Entries can tie into a railroad theme, but it's not required. With your entry in the Contest Room, you have the possibility of winning the People's Choice Award for favorite Arts & Crafts project.

Join in on the fun at the Blues Express 2025 Lone Star Region Convention! **ML**

Convention Contest Room Information

by Ray Byer
LSR Contest Co-Chair

Get ready to showcase your modeling skills in the Contest Room at the upcoming Blues Express 2025 LSR convention in Baton Rouge, LA on June 26-29, 2025.

As usual, there are entry categories for every taste:

- Steam Locomotives
- Diesel Locomotives
- Traction and Other Locomotives
- Passenger Cars
- Freight Cars
- Caboose
- M&W Cars
- On-line Structures
- Off-Line Structures
- Bridges & Trestles
- Displays/Modules
- Complete Trains
- Photography: Model - Black and White Print
- Photography: Model - Color Print
- Photography: Prototype - Black and White Print
- Photography: Prototype - Color Print
- Photography: Computer Enhanced
- Arts and Crafts: General
- Arts and Crafts: Railroadana
- Arts and Crafts: Needlework
- Arts and Crafts: Theme
- Convention Special Entry (12"x12"x12" Cube)

All take place in the contest room (Mesa 2). Even if you don't submit an entry, don't forget to cast your ballot for the People's Choice award for Best Complete Train, Best Model, and Best Arts & Crafts entry. You'll receive your ballots at registration.

Note that the contest room is on the second floor, which is only accessible by a wide stairway with handrails on both sides.

The contest room hours are as follows:

- **Thursday June 26** - 4:00 pm to 9:00 pm
- **Friday June 27** - 8:00 am to 3:00 pm
- **Saturday June 28** - 9:00 am to 1:00 pm (for viewing) and 2:00 pm to 4:00 pm (for pickup)

Important:

- Entries must be submitted between 4:00 pm on Thursday and 2:45 pm on Friday (during open hours).
- The contest room will be closed for judging on Friday evening starting at 6:00 pm.
- Entries not picked up by 4:00 pm on Saturday may be discarded.

All contest entries must have all paperwork completed in full before the entries can be submitted. Entry forms are available at: https://lonestarregion.com/sites/default/files/documents/contest/Contest_Entry_Form.pdf.

If you don't want to enter the contest but do want your craftsmanship judged for the Achievement Program, that will be available in the contest room as well. Each entry can be included in only one -- AP judging (merit points only) or Contest Judging (merit points and a chance for a plaque).

AP forms are available at https://www.nmra.org/forms.

If you would like to be a volunteer judge, where you can learn new skills and concepts for your own modeling, contact Jeff Palmer at res06wqv@gte.net or Ray Byer at RayByer@yahoo.com. No previous judging experience is required.

If you are interested in helping with entry check-in, contact Rod Fredericks at Fredericks.Rod@gmail.com.

Volunteering to be a contest room judge, contest room worker or for entry registration earns time units for the NMRA Achievement Program. **ML**

Mark your calendars now!

June 18-20, 2026

Find out more at the Blues Express Banquet at at connections2026.com

Tips for Baton Rouge Traffic

by Joe Leising
LSR Convention Chair

No different than cities such as Austin, Dallas, Fort Worth, Houston, San Antonio and others, traffic in Baton Rouge can get congested, especially during rush hour. This is certainly true when crossing the bridge over the Mississippi River on Interstate 10. However, if you do not want to continuously see only the vehicle in front of you and watch your fuel gauge go down as you go nowhere, you have options to enjoy the drive and experience a scenic route, either north or south of Interstate 10.

From Interstate 20 / 49 (North Texas / Dallas / Fort Worth)

If traveling on Interstate 20 to Shreveport, then heading south on Interstate 49, take exit #19 in Opelousas, LA and go east on State Highway 190 to Baton Rouge State Highway 190 goes through a few quaint small towns and ultimately across the Huey P. Long Bridge in northern Baton Rouge. Just like any bridge worth mentioning, (UP) railroad tracks run between the eastbound and westbound lanes. Once you cross the Mississippi River, State Highway 190 becomes Airline Highway (US 61), which goes directly to the Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South convention host hotel at 9990 Airline Highway.

From Interstate 10 (San Antonio / Austin / Houston)

If you are feeling lucky, you can travel on Interstate 10 until just before the Mississippi River bridge, and take exit #153 towards Port Allen / Plaquemine State Highway 1. Stay left to go towards Port Allen and travel five miles to State Highway 190, and cross the river on the Huey P Long Bridge. (You can also take exit #151 north to Highway 190.)

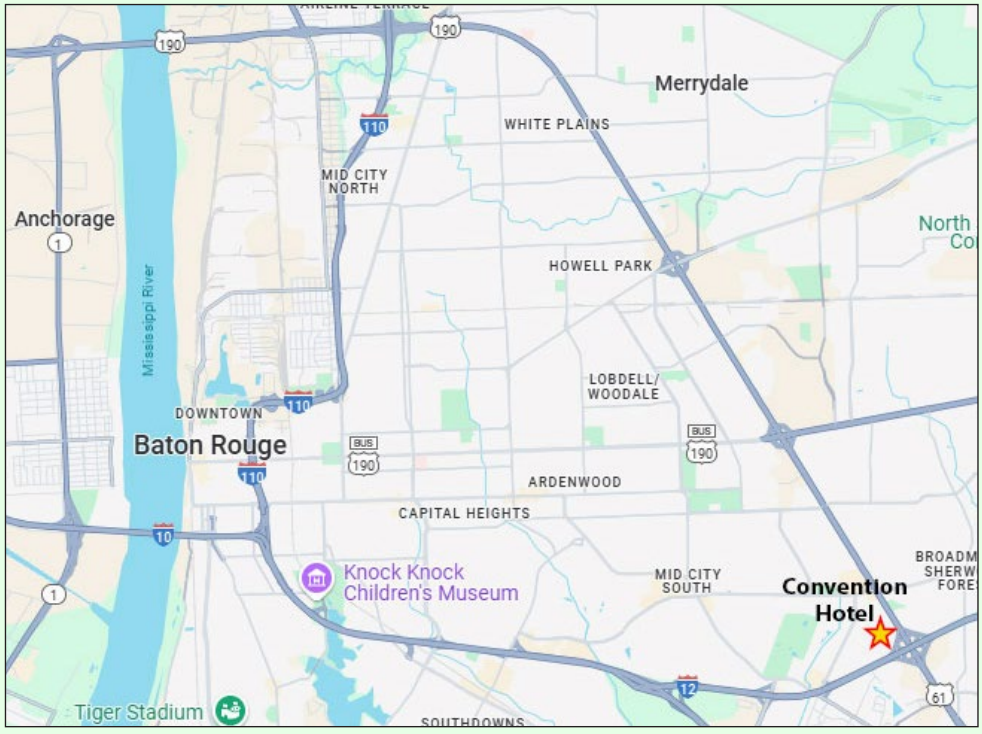
If you decide not to take your chances with the Atchafalaya Basin Bridge (which is often congested), exit Interstate 10 at exit #103B in Lafayette and take Interstate 49 north twenty miles to Opelousas, then State Highway 190, exit #19A east to cross the Mississippi River. Once you cross the Mississippi River, State Highway 190 becomes Airline Highway (US 61), which goes directly to the Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South convention host hotel at 9990 Airline Highway.

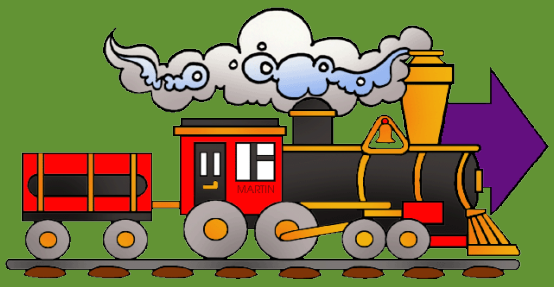
Another option is to cross the Mississippi River via the Sunshine Bridge just south of Donaldsonville, LA, south of Baton Rouge, and then follow Highway 70 back to Interstate 10, then northwest on Interstate 10 towards the Holiday Inn Baton Rouge South at 9990 Airline Highway, but this will add more than an hour to your drive.

And of course there are multiple other choices to make, on lesser traveled roads that hopefully provide the opportunity to relax a bit and experience America, but options to cross the Mississippi River are minimal.

Blues Express 2025 Convention Chairman Rod Fredericks advises us to avoid Interstate 10 once approaching and in Baton Rouge during the mid to late afternoon hours as the bridge gets very congested and that road construction is taking place on Interstate 10 on the east side of the river. A twenty-mile detour to Opelousas may be well worth your time. If you can check traffic via your phone or GPS, make sure to do so while you're in the Opelousas/Lafayette area.

For the Blues Express 2025, it is both about the destination and the journey. Make your journey safe and enjoyable to Red Stick, aka Baton Rouge, and plan on having an enjoyable experience at this year's Lone Star Region convention. **ML**





Wanted!
Nominees for the LSR Youth Award

Who: Any boy or girl 18 years old or younger with an interest in model railroading

Where: One nominee from each LSR Division

A past awardee: May be renominated for another year if they meet the qualifications specified in the LSR Constitution. **Contact Chuck Lind** chucklind46@gmail.com

How: Fill out the special Youth Award Membership Form available on http://www.lonestarregion.com/

When: Submit your nomination to your LSR Division Director **today**!

For more information contact:
Chuck Lind, Youth Chairman: chucklind46@gmail.com

Join the new Lone Star Region
Member Directory

The LSR has a new member directory! **Joining is completely optional,**
and only the information you choose to provide will be included.
For privacy, the directory is only accessible to those who participate.

We encourage all members to join, especially if you're interested in visiting other model railroaders while travelling in the region -- this directory will be a great resource!

To join or if you have questions, contact Chuck Lind at chucklind46@gmail.com.
Once he adds you to the system, you'll be able to access the directory using the **Instant Church Directory** app on your smartphone or tablet.

To get started: Install the Instant Church Directory app. Create a login using the same email address you gave Chuck. (**The emails must match, or you won't be able to log in.**) Choose a password with at least 8 characters, including 2 capital letters, numbers, or symbols. Check your email (including your spam folder) for a confirmation message and click the link to verify your account.

Once verified, you can browse the directory, update your own information and photo, and choose how much (or how little) you want to share.

We hope you'll join and help us build a valuable resource for all LSR members!

Eight Days in Bavaria Germany via Rail

by Michael Harang

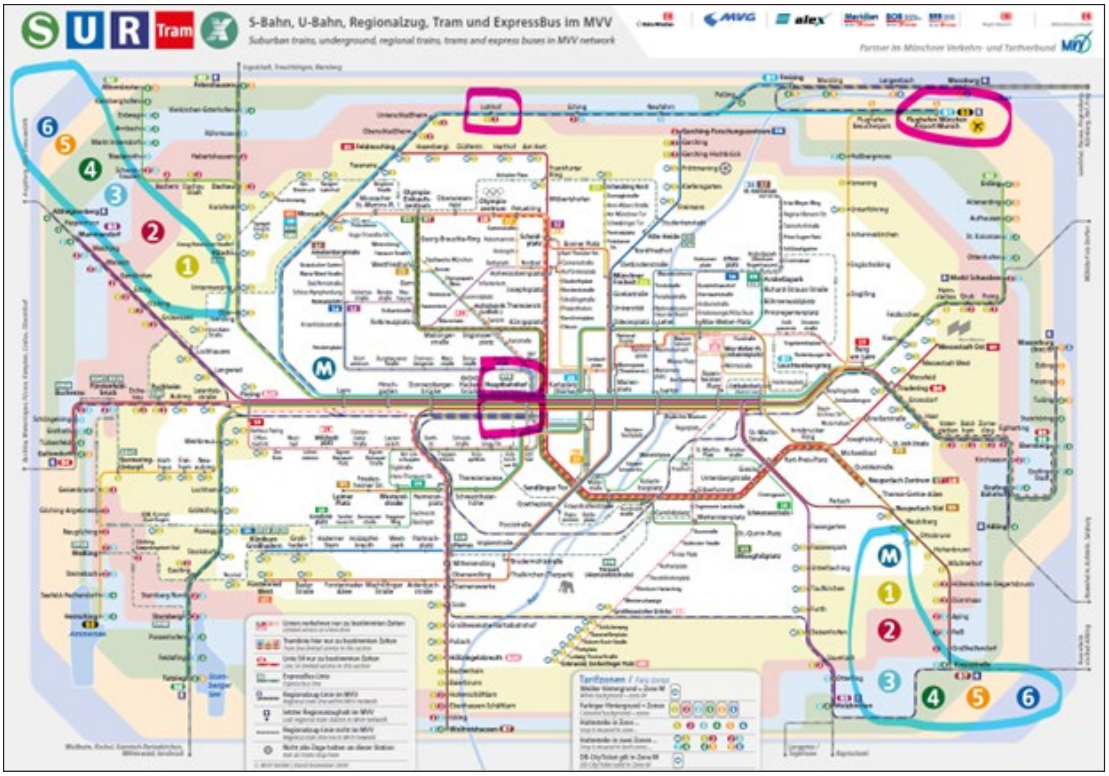
The trip was at least one year in the making. My wife Suzette and I wanted to visit the area because of ancestry reasons – my maternal great-grandparents immigrated to the US in June of 1884 from Wisemann Germany and Suzette's maternal great-grandparents immigrated from the Bamberg Germany area. We included our two sons and one of their girlfriends on the trip as well. So, we five intrepid travelers headed out on May 6, 2025 for de fatherland. The three young adults did not want to spend the monies needed to hire a private tour company (charter bus and driver) for our eight-day journey, so we opted for the "Rick Steves" method of European travel – backpacks and train travel. Go light, young man!

Beginning in December 2024, the airline tickets were purchased. Tyler and Lizzy were to leave Colorado Springs and travel to Atlanta, then connect to Detroit. While Suzette, Matthew and I would depart DFW and go straight to Detroit. The five of us would be on the same flight from Detroit to Munich. For the return, we would all leave Munich together back to Detroit, then separate to get back to home bases. You know what they say about the "best laid plans" – more on that later.

In January 2025, the real trip planning began in earnest. I started mapping out how to visit Munich, Landshut, Regensburg, Nuremberg, Bamberg, Stuttgart, Füssen, and Salzburg, Austria. With some specific destinations in the plans, we decided that spending the first four days in Munich, then using inter-city train service to get to Landshut, Regensburg, Bamberg, Stuttgart, and returning to Munich would be our best option. This plan would require the use of local Munich transportation and inter-city transportation to get to the other city destinations on the trip. Let me outline the intra-city first, then cover inter-city after that.

Munich is a city of roughly 1.6 million residents as of 2025, and many of those residents rely on an intricate network of S-Bahn, U-Bahn, bus, and trolley transportation. Known as the S-Bahn (Stadtschnellbahn or "urban rapid rail" officially), Munich's urban train network was established in 1972 as part of the modernization efforts for the Olympic Games. Its eight lines cover almost 150 different stations, connecting the city center with the airport and Dachau Concentration Camp. The S-Bahn operates daily from approximately 4:15 am to 1:00 am, with trains running every 10 minutes in rush hour and every 20 minutes during the rest of the day. At night, trains depart every 20 to 40 minutes. On Fridays, Saturdays

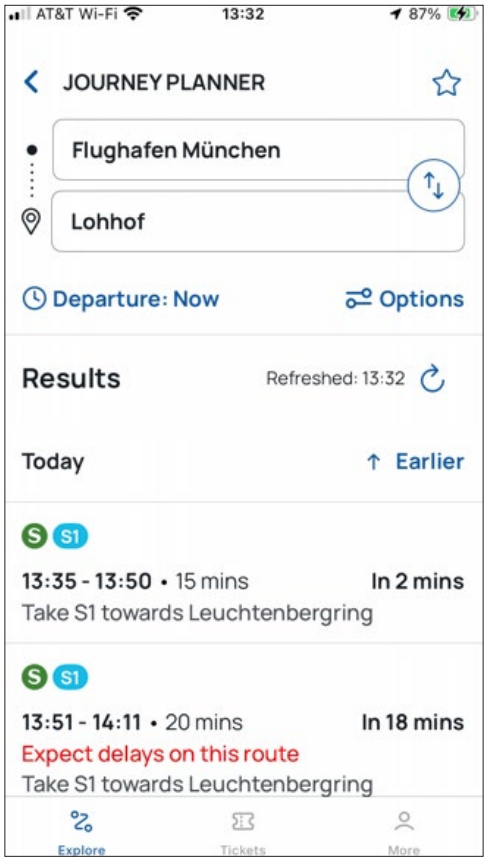
and the nights before public holidays, trains run all through the night. S-Bahn is mostly surface trains, while U-Bahn is almost exclusively underground – so when you see or hear S-Bahn think "surface", and for U-Bahn, think underground subway. The transportation system is broken down into zones – with central Munich as zone "M" and each zone moving out from the center of the city as zones 1 thru 12. The airport is in zone 5. Ticket machines are conveniently located at the airport, and at every station stop. Traveling from the airport to central Munich takes an M-5 ticket. Here is an overview of the zones, they are numbered M through 6 on this map and are color coded: M is white in the center, 1 is a light-yellow green surrounding M, etc. The airport is at the top left (highlighted in red) and is served by the S1 and S8 S-Bahn line, and regionalzug or R line. I have also highlighted Lohhof (our Airbnb location) and the München Hauptbanhhof (main train station) in the center of the city.


S U R Tram
S-Bahn, U-Bahn, Regionalzug, Tram und ExpressBus im MVV
Suburban trains, underground, regional trains, trams and express buses in MVV network

Most people get ready to exit the train well before arriving at their stop as the doors stay open only so long, and there may be people entering too. All trains have doors on both sides of the car – some station platforms are between the tracks, while others are left or right of the tracks. Audible announcements detail the next stop in both German and English languages and let you know what side of the car to exit on. Monitors aboard list the stops and times for each station stop. Lastly, mind the gap – that small space between the platform and the car door – but don't cross the broad white stripe that runs parallel to the edge of the platforms and is separated by apx. 3 feet as some trains do not stop at your station; they blast by at well over 100 km/h (60mp/h). Safety First!

Internet searching uncovered the "München Card Group" – a discount card that allows up to five persons (imagine my luck) to use all manner of Munich intra-city transportation, unlimited 24/7 for the specified purchased days. So, for $233 US dollars, we were set, and we did not have to purchase individual tickets for any one day or any one trip. Of course, I had a printed copy of the ticket (shown below) that I shared with everyone in our group. Security personnel on the trains and busses will and DO indeed check for tickets – the penalty for riding without is a €60 (60 Euro) fine. We were checked several times in those first four days, but the system is really run on the honor system -- way too many riders and too few security personnel to check everyone. There are no turnstiles with coin slots, and no bar code scanners anywhere; with no conductors, you just hop on and hop off at your stops – really easy and convenient too.

Most train stops are about two minutes long, enough time to enter or exit the train. Beware of people bringing along their bicycles – they ride 'em to the station, hop on, then at their destination, hop off and continue their ride. We saw folks with two wheeled bikes, recumbent, and several three wheeled bikes getting on and off trains.



The MVGO App

We downloaded the MVGO app that is used to find all departure and arrival times for any day, any time, with all originations and destinations on the local Munich system. Below is what the app looks like showing the S1 line from the airport to Lohhof, a fifteen-minute trip leaving in two minutes – all aboard! In our experience, most of the trains were arriving and departing on time – quite an accomplishment for the number of trains on this system daily. And did I mention that these rail lines are used for freight too? It was not unusual to be waiting on the platform for our train, and several other passenger and freight trains would pass by – most at high speed.

We chose an Airbnb spot for our four nights in Munich to save some significant travel dollars opposed to hotels near downtown Munich. The Airbnb location was in Lohhof – a nice, quaint suburb about twenty-five rail minutes from central Munich (Marienplatz), and about twenty minutes from the Munich airport (München Flughafen). From the Lohhof train platform, a quick 3-minute walk put us in the Airbnb. In the below screen capture, the Lohhof S-Bahn platform is in the lower right of the frame – designated by the familiar white "S" inside the green circle. Our Airbnb was in the six-story complex circled above.

Our Airbnb and the Lohhof Station

That platform is the end (or beginning) of the S1 and S8 lines. As short ride later, we were in Lohhof – success!

An interesting observation I made right away – there are very few motor vehicle street level crossings on these lines and the trains do not stop unless they are at a scheduled stop. And there are catenary lines everywhere – quite impressive when you see it for the first time. Many of the trains were of Siemens manufacture like this one below. And, and they are manned with at least an engineer. Additionally, you typically do not hear anyone talking on the local Munich trains, and never any music. Very calm and peaceful.

The first evening, we traveled down the S1 line to the Hauptbahnhof, followed by a short walk to dinner at an authentic German restaurant: the Hofbräuhaus. And yes, we enjoyed some great bier and music too.

Our first evening at the Hofbräuhaus

Remember those best laid plans? Yep, Suzette, Matthew and I were a day late due to an extreme thunderstorm that crossed DFW airport right before our scheduled departure on Tuesday. All flights were mixed up and we ended up leaving the following afternoon on Wednesday. Meanwhile, Tyler and Lizzy arrived on time and made their way from the airport to the Airbnb on their own. So, on our arrival in Munich on Thursday, May 8, we walked out of the Munich airport terminal with our backpacks on, saw the S sign across a small plaza, and made our way down the escalator to the platform.

Platform at Lohhof, photobombed by Suzette

My old nemesis: Siemens. They're everywhere

Our group in the Marianplatz, in front of the Rathausturm with its impressive glockenspiel

The following morning, Friday May 9, we again took the S1 from Lohhof to the Hauptbahnhof to board an ICE train to Salzburg, Austria. There are many different train companies (operators) in Germany, and each has its own app and schedules. We ended up using the DB Navigator or the Rail Planner apps. Before our departure flight to Germany, I purchased a RailEurope Group pass that covered any five travel days anywhere in Europe. This was a single $1750 US dollar expense that covered all five of us for travel between Munich, Salzburg, Regensburg, Bamberg, Stuttgart, and back to Munich. Each traveler gets a different code (similar to airline 6-digit alpha-numeric codes) that you load into the app. Then you can select your origination city, destination city, and time of departure in the app, and when you find the train of your choice, you can apply one of your travel days and secure a ticket for the train. Interestingly, this same train we took to Salzburg departed minutes later for Budapest Hungary. The app also allows you to "show your ticket", which is a QR Code that the train security personnel will scan if you are asked.

In Salzburg, we walked the central city, then attended a Mozart concert and dinner at the massive and impressive Hohensalzburg Fortress. A five-minute funicular ride is needed to get up to and down from the fortress.

A view of Salzburg from the impressive Hohensalzburg Fortress observing area with the winding Salzach River in the background.

After our day in Salzburg, we returned to Munich via train, then the S1 train to Lohhof, arriving about 3:00 am. The following day, we were on a bus tour to the amazing Neuschwanstein and Linderhof Castles of King Ludwig II, plus a stop in Oberammergau. No photos allowed inside, words cannot do its splendor justice. Simply stunning!

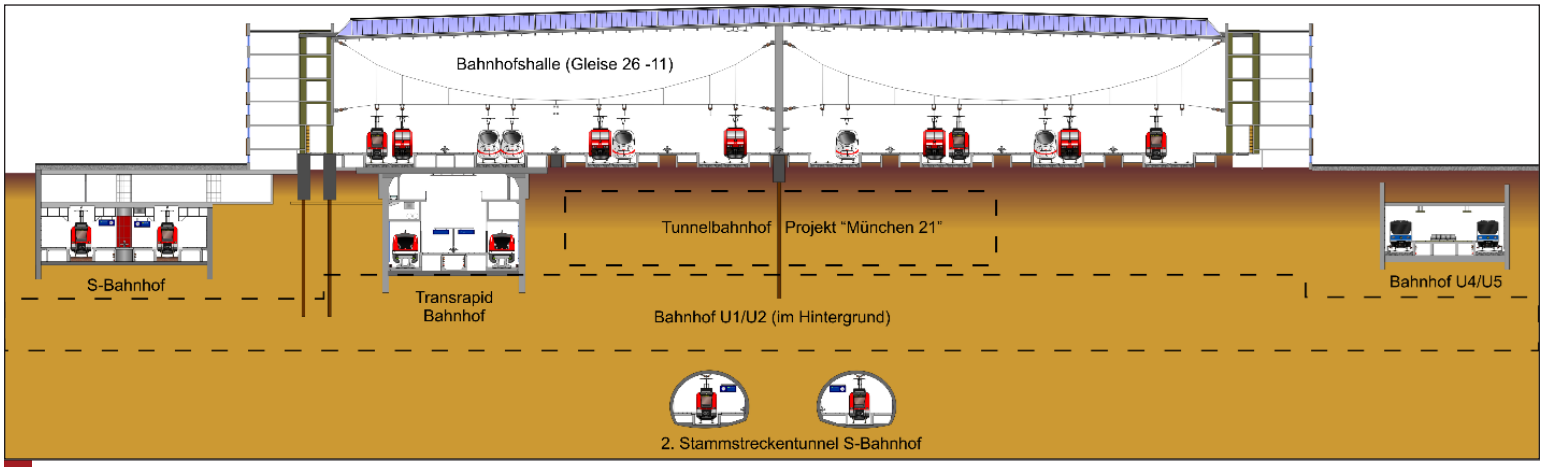
Hohensalzburg Fortress funicular

Neuschwanstein Castle

Linderhof Castle

The München Hbf (Hauptbahnhof – Central Main Station), consists of multiple levels to accommodate the main tracks, the S-Bahn, the U-Bahn, and the R tracks. There are 26 gleise (platforms) above ground as seen in this diagram, all under cover, with the S, U and R tracks below. Tracks 11 thru 26 are under the main building, with tracks 1 thru 10 under the two outer wing terminals.

The central signaling center was brought into operation on October 11, 1964, at 4:00 am. The new signal box controlled 295 sets of points and 446 signals and detected occupancy on 300 sections of track and seven automatic block sections. In the signaling center there were four interlockings, one controlling the Holzkirchen wing station, two controlling the tracks of the main hall and the other one controlling the Starnberg wing station. The new interlockings needed only 38 staff for operations and 12 for maintaining the signal technology, saving 93 jobs.



Great arial view of the entire München Hbf complex. The station serves 450,000 passengers daily.

Passing through the München Hbf on our way to gleise 5 (platform 5), I found this shop. Unfortunately, it was closed that morning - I could've spent a lot of time and euros inside.

Departure from the München Hbf on the ICE

For our next destination, we left Munich and headed for Regensburg – a UNESCO World Heritage Site. The city is located at the confluence of the Danube, Naab and Regen rivers, and is the Danube's northernmost point. Regensburg was originally an imperial Roman river fort, founded in 179 AD.

Our next stop was Bamberg - a town in Upper Franconia district in Bavaria, Germany, on the river Regnitz close to its confluence with the river Main. Bamberg had 79,000 inhabitants in 2022. The town dates back to the 9th century, when its name was derived from the nearby Babenberch castle. Cited as one of Germany's most beautiful towns, with medieval streets and buildings, the old town of Bamberg with around 2,400 timber houses has been a UNESCO World Heritage Site since 1993.

Our last visited city was Stuttgart – we decided to visit the Porsche Museum located there.

On the trip from Stuttgart to back to Munich, I snapped

Arrival at the Regensburg Hbf (Hauptbahnhof – Central Main Station)

Bamberg Hbf

Bamberg Cathedral with its four impressive towers, completed in the 13th century

Tank train passing by on the way to Stuttgart

German auto rack

The Porsche Museum

On-board monitor on one of our ICE trains. 142 mph!

Station display at 5:45am

a photo of the ICE on-board monitor displaying our speed – and this was in a miles long tunnel: 229 km/h = 142 mph, arriving in München-Pasing in 14 minutes, platform 9, then at München Hbf 9 minutes after that.

On the morning of our departure from Munich, we boarded the S1 at the München Hauptbahnhof lower level platform. The overhead monitor included a lot of information:

Vividly displayed is the DB symbol (Deutsche Bahn or German Train), the white S on the green circle indicating this is an S-Bahn platform. Gleis 2 = Platform 2. At the top is the train number: S1 and the final destination of the train: either Freising and/or Flughafen (airport). Listed below are the intermediate stops: Liam (pronounced Lime), Moosach (pronounced Moo Saa), ext. The note below it is also of vital importance: "Please enter the rear part of the train" and shows cars C, B, A. Because at the Neufahrn station, the front two cars were split off of the three rear cars and proceeded to Freising, while the other three cars at the rear went on to the airport. Don't be in the wrong car – you will likely not get to where you want to go! Lastly, notice the clock time – yes indeed we were at the platform for 5:45 am.

We saw and experienced first-hand the extensive German rail system in Bavaria. With some basic information gathered beforehand, there were no real surprises – except for "Seat Reservations Optional" on some of the inter-city trains. What we learned about that is: even though you have a "pass" and a "ticket", you do not have a reserved seat on that particular train. Without a reserved seat, you could potentially be required to stand for the entire trip. So, we finally figured out how to purchase seat reservations and did so. But, in the long run, they were never really needed because we did not board an inter-city train that was full to capacity. All in all, it was a marvelous trip, and the train travel experience was highly positive. If you travel to Europe, especially Germany, do yourself a favor and hop on for a great ride and experience. You won't regret it!

Until next time, Auf Wiedersehen! **ML**

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Building the Layout - First Things First: Train Room and Backdrop

by Cliff Scherer

Building a layout is an ongoing project – the build process can last months or, more often, years. The more you plan the phases in a logical succession, the more enjoyable the journey will be. But where do you start? Obviously benchwork comes before you can put down track, but even before that you need to prep the train room and, in most cases, install the backdrop.

Last quarter we talked about using track planning software and the Fredericksburg & Northern layout was used in some of the examples. This layout, currently under construction, will be the basis of several Getting Started columns including this one covering Train Room considerations and backdrop installation.

The layout backdrop can go a long way toward making realistic scenes on your layout. Here, the backdrop on Wayne Jones' Franklinton Crossing is both subtle and impressive at the same time. Note how the backdrop does its job without grabbing attention from the layout.

Before starting on benchwork, the layout room needs to be prepped. This could be as little as making sure there is enough space or as much as remodeling the entire room. In the case of the F&N, the layout room was constructed as part a remodel in that part of the house so there was plenty of latitude in how it would accommodate the future layout.

Consider the items below that you can control for the layout space before you begin building the benchwork:

- Backdrop – material, installation, finish (paint, photomural)
- Flooring – hard floor, unpadded carpet, padded carpet
- Lighting – enough light, direction of lights, color temperature of the lights
- Windows – how to deal with them
- Wall Color(s) – how to complement the layout (sky, earth, etc.)
- Room temperature – proper ventilation and temperature for the number of operators that might be in the room at any one time
- Electrical Needs – this applies primarily to larger layouts.

Backdrop

One often-overlooked item on a layout that can make or break the illusion of reality is the backdrop, or lack of an adequate backdrop. Most of us want to get to track down quickly, and we tend to focus only on what is needed to support that track. But, in most cases, the first thing that needs to be installed is the backdrop – ideally before benchwork gets in the way.

Backdrops are most often made of hardboard, styrene sheets, or the wall itself. The F&N uses 1/16" (1.6mm) 4'x8' styrene sheets for the backdrop. These can be purchased from

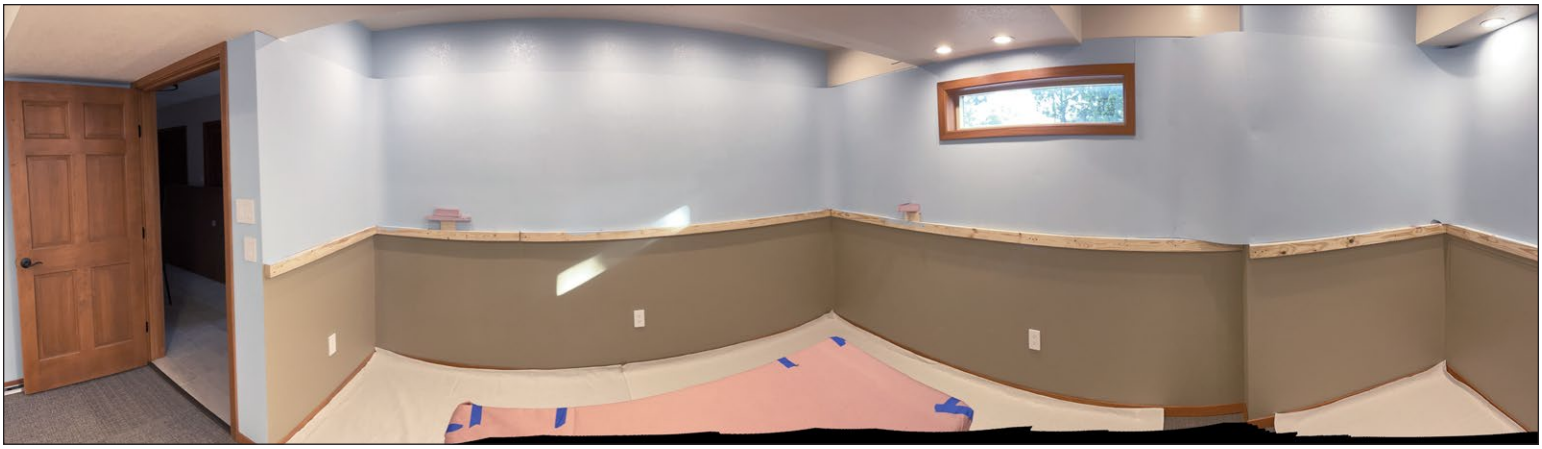

Figure 2: The backdrop is much easier to install before the layout room is filled with benchwork. Here the ledger board can be seen running around the layout room. The styrene backdrop has been installed above the ledger, plastic wood filler has been applied, and the first "vast sky" color of flat paint has been added.

plastics dealers in most major cities and one cut on each sheet is often included in the price.

Advantages of styrene over hardboard or just painting the sheetrock as a backdrop:

- Styrene is light in weight compared to hardboard.
- Styrene is very easy to cut – simply score it and snap it.
- Styrene looks better than just painting the sheetrock wall which usually has texture.
- Styrene bends into a very tight radius compared to hardboard.
- Styrene is easy to hang in multiple ways to suit your needs.
- Styrene provides an excellent surface to receive paint or glue for a photomural.
- Styrene is stable, it does not expand and contract.

Some advantages of hardboard:

- Hardboard is stiffer than styrene which means fewer supports. This is important for free-standing backdrops, but is not important where the backdrop is attached to the wall directly.
- Fasteners are easier to use with hardboard because it is available in either 1/8" or 3/16" thicknesses providing a bit of room to counter-sink screws.
- Hardboard is generally available at big box hardware stores while 4'x8' styrene is only available from specialty plastics distributors.
- Hardboard costs about $23 for a 4'x8'x3/16" sheet while styrene costs around $27 for a 4'x8'x1/16" sheet. If the plastics dealer has to order the styrene, they may also pass on shipping costs.

Installing a Styrene Backdrop

The backdrop can be attached to the back of the benchwork for a free-standing layout, but more often, a room-sized or shelf layout will be attached to the wall. If attached to the back of free-standing benchwork, a wood frame will need to be constructed and attached to the benchwork. When attaching to a sheetrock wall, no framing is required. We'll explore that option here.

First things first: whether you use styrene, hardboard or any other sheet material for the backdrop, you should set a level base line for the bottom edge of the backdrop. It is far easier to establish a level bottom edge than to try to level the top edge, even if your layout will ultimately have multiple track and scenery levels.

Ledger Board

The easiest way to establish a level base line for the entire layout benchwork and for the lower edge of the backdrop is to install a ledger on all layout walls. A ledger in carpentry is a beam that supports joists such as in constructing a deck that

Figure 3: The ledger board provides a level point of reference for future benchwork and makes it much easier to install the backdrop. Here you can see the styrene resting on the top of the ledger. Using a ledger board, it's possible to install a 48"x96" sheet of styrene without assistance.

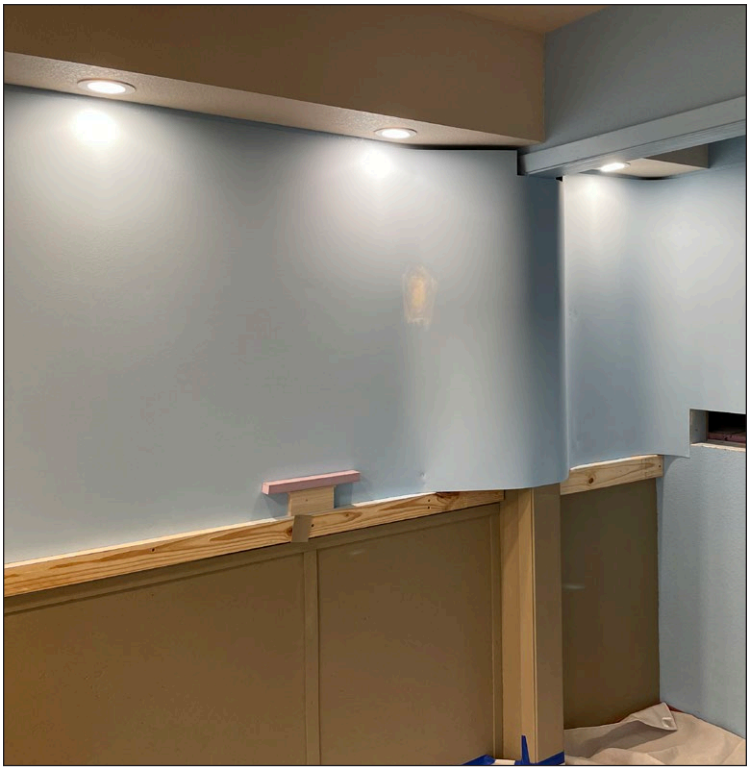

Figure 4: The top edge of the ledger is set to allow for any benchwork that will be on top of it. Here, the piece of wood and pink foam on top of the ledger represents the height of the joists and the foam sub-roadbed. The height of the pink foam is the height of the lowest level of track on the layout.

is attached to a house. The ledger is usually a 2x6 or bigger board that is lag bolted to the house on level. The ends of the joists sit on top of this ledger and run perpendicular from the ledger out to the far edge of the deck. On a model railroad that is attached to a wall this same carpentry makes things easier, just using a smaller ledger board, of course.

The ledger will support your joists if you use them and the layout surface. Be sure to subtract the height of these items from the lowest desired height for track on the layout. See Figure 4 for detail on setting height. The height of the ledger board does not change around the layout. This will be covered in more detail next quarter when we talk about benchwork.

The best way to establish a level line for your ledger is with a laser level set on a tripod in the center of the room. Ensure that the tripod head is leveled so that it can be swiveled without taking the laser beam out of level. If you don't have a laser level, it's a tool worth buying or borrowing. Be aware that most laser levels in the lower cost range have a variance of ¼" due to the line becoming out of focus as the laser level gets positioned further from the wall. You should work with your specific laser level to find the distance from the wall that gives the best focus (narrow laser line).

If you use a spirit level instead of a laser level, use the longest one you can get your hands on – at least 48", but preferably 60" or more. Frequently take multiple readings from different locations with the spirit level. At corners, check the level along each wall and at 45 degrees across the corner. Do not try to level the ledger by measuring up from the floor or down from the ceiling. The floor in a room can vary by an inch or more and the ceiling even more than that. You will end up being off level by this amount.

The ledger board itself should be 2x4 lumber that is straight and void of any large knots. Large knots cause warping in that area of the wood. If you have a table saw, consider ripping the 2x4 down to 2x3 which will be easier to deal with if you're hanging the ledger by yourself.

Mark the location of each wall stud using a stud finder. The new density sensing stud finders work quite well.

If you don't have a helper to get the ledger attached consider using a brad nailer to make the initial attachment and then go back with screws.

Screw the ledger to each stud using 2 ½" self-tapping deck screws.

Even if you use shelf brackets to attach parts of the layout to the wall, the ledger will make things easier for you. It keeps everything level, provides solid support for the back edge of joists or sub-roadbed in the absence of joists, and it provides a convenient auto-leveling support for the lower edge of the backdrop.

Sizing the Styrene Backdrop

The height of the backdrop from the top of the ledger board up is somewhat a matter of personal preference. These are the factors to consider:

- Limitation of the backdrop sheet. The backdrop is installed with the 8' edge horizontal so the height is limited to 4' for a 4'x8' sheet.
- Maximum height of scenery.
- Distance between top of ledger board and ceiling.

It's normally not necessary to take the backdrop all the way to the ceiling, but it should extend above the average person's eye level. So, the top edge should be at least 6 ½' above the floor for best effect. On the other hand, if you will have mountains extending almost to the ceiling, you'll probably want the backdrop to go at least that high as well.

In any case, it's best to determine the height in advance so that you can have the supplier rip the sheet to the proper width.

Cutting the Styrene

If you need to cut the styrene yourself, it's simple and easy to do. These tools make it easy: a metal straight edge long enough to cover the length of cut you want, a plastic sheet scoring tool, and two trigger clamps. You can use a utility knife to score the styrene, but it will not work as well as a scoring tool, which creates a groove that allows the styrene sheet to be snapped cleanly.

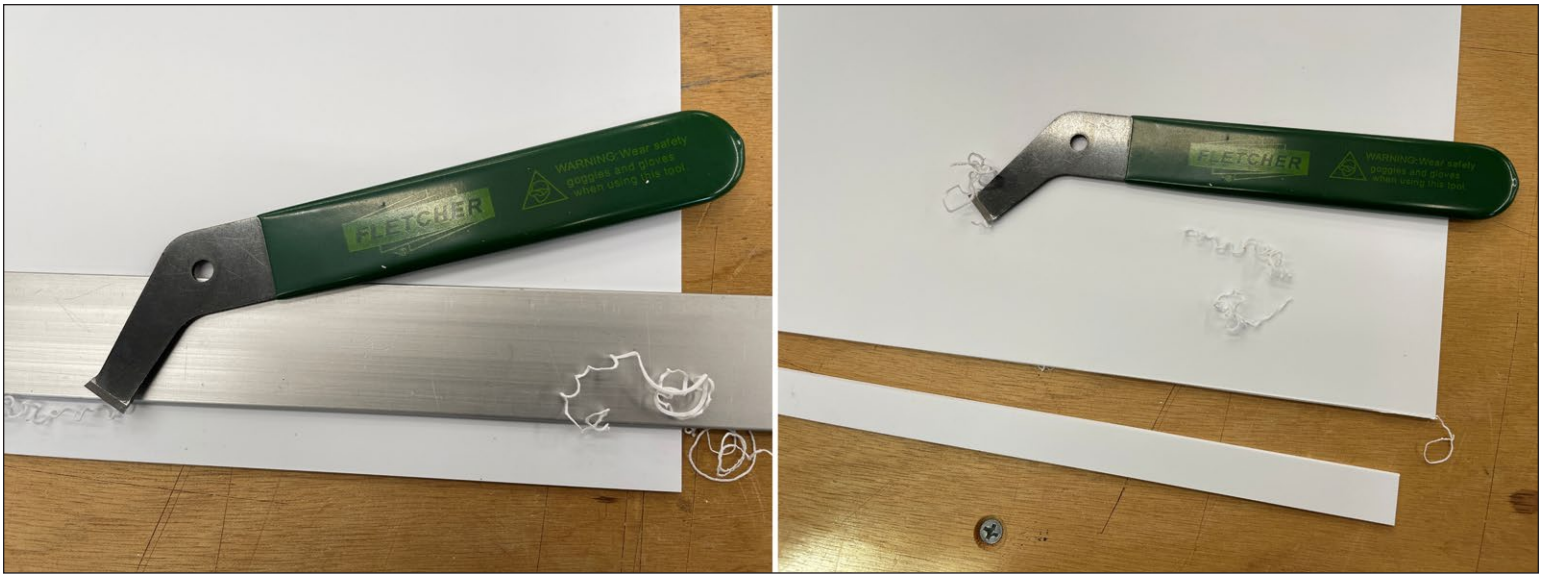
FLETCHER
WARNING: Wear safety goggles and gloves when using this tool.
FLETCHER
WARNING: Wear safety goggles and gloves when using this tool.

Figure 5: The Fletcher 05-111 Plastic Scoring Tool makes cutting large sheets of styrene easy using a metal straight edge to guide the tool.

To cut the sheet, clamp the metal straight edge along the line of the cut and then take two or three passes with the scoring tool. Once scored, place the styrene sheet with the score line facing up and parallel to the edge of a table. The part to be removed should be hanging over the edge of the table. Simply snap the piece to be removed down and it will leave a clean break. If you don't have a large enough table, then lay the styrene on the floor with the score line facing down. Hold the metal straight edge against the score line (you'll need to mark its location). Pull up on the part of the styrene that is away from the straight edge, working the styrene so that it snaps at the score line and along the straight edge.

Mounting the Styrene Backdrop

The styrene can be mounted to the sheetrock wall in the 3 ways:

- Brads set with an electric or pneumatic brad nailer
- Brads set with a hammer and nail set
- Construction adhesive

Of these, the brads will leave only small holes in the sheetrock if the layout ever needs to be removed. The construction adhesive will ruin the sheetrock if the backdrop is ever removed. Brads can be just as easy to use as adhesive.

The F&N uses brads to attach the styrene by setting the styrene sheet in position on the top of the ledger. The ledger shows where the studs are from its screw locations. The brad nailer is used to drive 3 brads into each stud for the F&N's 42" high backdrop. Plan the location of sheets so that no seams will be near a corner where you will curve the styrene through the corner.

When installing the styrene at corners attach the flat part leading toward the corner and work the styrene into the radius you desire. Then drive three screws at the top, middle and bottom into a stud closest to where the styrene starts to lift away from the wall and into the curve. Sheetrock screws can be used for this, but you must be careful when you drive them through the styrene. Use an electric drill/driver to start the screws, but don't drive them all the way in. Use a hand screwdriver to finish setting the screws being careful to set

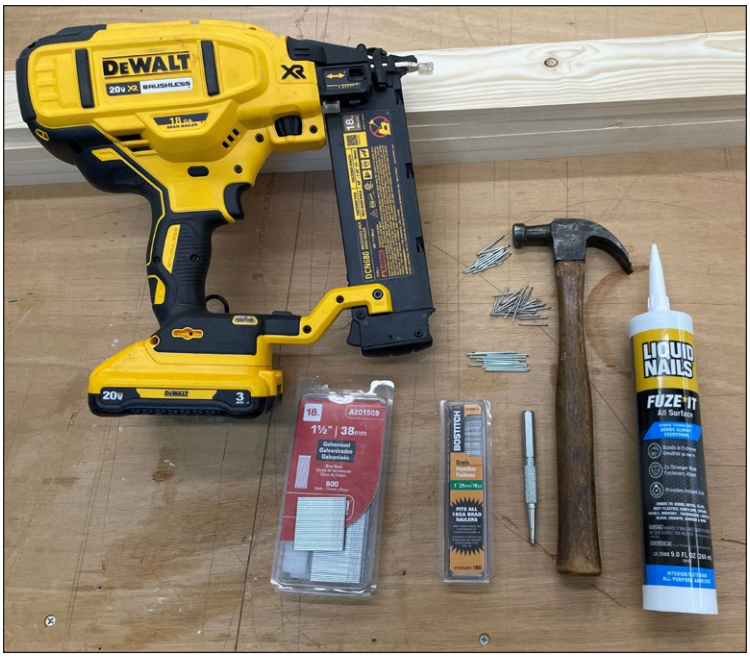

Figure 6: The electric brad nailer on the left makes quick work of mounting the styrene to the wall. In the center, the hammer and wire brads along with the nail set can be used instead. On the right is a recommended adhesive if you want a more permanent installation. Liquid Nails Fuze-It is made for surfaces like smooth plastic. It is also fast gripping so that clamping is not needed, however you should put a few brad nails near the top of the backdrop to ensure the styrene does not pull away as the Fuze-It dries.

the screw deep enough to make it is relatively flush with the styrene surface, but not so deep as to break through the styrene. If you do break through with a screw, it can be repaired as we will see, but better not to need the repair.

Figure 7: On Brian Helms' layout, the hill goes up above eye level and then utilizes trees to hide the layout-to-backdrop transition.

Prep the Styrene for Paint or Photomural

The backdrop will need to have seams and blemishes patched before adding the final paint or photomural. DAP Plastic Wood works well for this. See Figure 4 where plastic wood has been applied to a blemish that didn't show up until paint was applied to the backdrop. It was easy to fill the blemish and then spot paint this area. It is water-based making smoothing it easier and cleanup also easy. It doesn't shrink or crack and requires minimal sanding if it's applied correctly. It can fill relatively large gaps and holes and it's also very easy to sand. Smooth it on with a plastic putty knife. Keep a small dish of water and a couple of paper towels nearby. You'll want to dampen your putty knife occasionally and use damp paper towels to remove excess if you get too much on the styrene. Work it into all the seams, brad nail divots, any holes and any other irregularities in the styrene surface. Allow it to dry overnight and then use a medium or fine grit sanding sponge to smooth any areas that need it.

While you have a fine grit sanding sponge out, run it lightly over the entire styrene surface. This will give a slight roughness to the styrene allowing paint or glue to adhere better.

Apply the Final Finish

There are many sources for photomurals. A Google search of "model railroad photo backdrops" will yield a number of sources. Photomurals are not all the same, so carefully follow the directions for installation, especially in terms of recommended glues.

If you want to paint the backdrop yourself there are many great YouTube videos that will take you through the process. Whether you go with a photomural or paint is a matter of personal preference. Either can provide outstanding results.

Considerations for the backdrop image or painted scene:

- In general, don't make the backdrop scene more dramatic than the layout in front of it. Dramatic backdrops distract attention from the layout in front of it. There are exceptions. For example, layouts set with considerable mountain scenery on the layout can look even more impressive with dramatic mountain scenes on the backdrop.
- Try to take a photo from an elevated vantage point that is similar to what you want to see in your backdrop. Try to do this on a day when the sun and clouds are similar to what you want on the backdrop. Also be sure that the sun is behind you for your real-world photo. This photo will give you a better idea of what your "scene" should look like. It's amazing how much our memory of a scene differs from reality.
- If you have hills or mountains that are not fully tree covered, consider making the scenery at the back edge of the layout crest and then slope down to the backdrop. This hides the layout-to-backdrop transition.
- Tree covered scenery makes it easy to hide the transition from layout to backdrop since the trees hide the transition line. One very effective way to do this is with tree covered hills that rise up on the layout to eye level or above. This places the transition line high up and hidden by trees so it's nearly impossible to detect. See Figure 7.
- For a flat layout consider using trees, shrubs, building flats, and other items to conceal the layout to backdrop transition.
- Perspective is difficult to paint for non-artists and photo backdrops are equally as difficult to transition

for perspective. A road transitioning from the layout to the backdrop is one of the more difficult things to pull off successfully. Consider having the road bend and disappear behind a building, trees, or other features so that you eliminate trying to show it on the backdrop.

- Use "zero relief" features against the backdrop where there is little space between the backdrop and features on the layout. This will do a great job of hiding the transition from layout to backdrop. See Figure 8.

Figure 8: Zero relief trees on Steve Jackob's Austin & Tayor & Pacific RR successfully disguise the transition line between layout and backdrop. In addition, they add the illusion of depth the layout.

The management of the F&N was fortunate to have the backdrop painted by a good friend who is a professional artist – the backdrop is truly a work of art. This is the process that was followed in painting the backdrop:

1. Applied INSL-X STIX Primer, available at ACE Hardware. This is a Urethane Acrylic that provides an excellent primer for plastic surfaces (or most any other surface for that matter).
2. Then painted the entire backdrop with Sherwin Williams Urethane Acrylic Flat, color: Vast Sky. Any flat latex paint could also be used since the STIX primer provides adhesion. The Vast Sky color is perfect for a summer sky that is slightly hazy – in other words, an average sky blue.
3. For the horizon haze, Sherwin Williams Urethane Acrylic Flat, color: Mid Blue was blended in from the bottom of the backdrop to about ¼ up. This color is closer to white than blue and really duplicates the look of a summer horizon on a partly cloudy day. It's necessary to blend this color into the Vast Sky as you paint up from the horizon. If you want to learn about blending techniques, Google "ombré paint blending." Ombré is a term for blending paint colors into each other. See Figure 9.
4. Clouds were added by using whites in the cool spectrum fading to blue-gray tones on the lower edges of the clouds. On the F&N, these colors were artists' acrylics custom mixed on the paint palette.

The Layout Room

Let's look at some layout room considerations. You will have varying levels of control over these so please skip to those that apply to you.

Flooring

Flooring can include hard floors, padded carpet and unpadded carpet.

Figure 9: On the left, the horizon haze has been painted in but not blended into the sky. On the right, the blending has made a realistic transition between haze and upper sky.

Hard floors are great for providing a solid footing for benchwork and controlling dust. On the negative side, they make the room noisier, and they are hard on the feet for standing.

Padded Carpet is what is found in carpeted rooms of most homes. It is easier on the feet when standing and it absorbs sound. On the other hand it makes a poor surface for benchwork feet, and it promotes dust.

Unpadded carpet is what is often found in offices. It can come in rolls or 2' carpet squares that are glued to the subfloor. It is typically very stain and wear resistant. It absorbs some sound and is easier on the feet than a hard floor. Bench work feet will still sit almost as firm as a hard floor. If you install the carpet squares, individual squares can be replaced if they are damaged. The cost for carpet squares varies, but in the past has run less than padded carpet, wood floors or tile. The F&N uses carpet squares.

Lighting

Lighting has become very technical. Today, there are even college degrees in lighting design. It's become an even bigger thing with the advent of LED lights. With LEDs it's easy to add plenty of light at the color temperature that suits the purpose and without driving up the electric bill too much. Here are some lighting considerations for the train room.

- Provide enough light. Instead of relying on standard residential ceiling fixtures, change these out for light bars, track lights or fixtures that contain multiple gimbaled LEDs. Consider track lighting that will provide lights that can be directed toward the appropriate areas of the layout. Try to avoid creating areas that are brightly lit, while other areas are in relative shadow.
- Prevent Glare. When adding all these fancy lights, it's easy to create glare in the eyes of visitors. Use a valance (simply some type of shade) that shields the eyes from the light fixtures. In Figure 11, the left photo shows glare from the soffit lights. On the right a 1x4 trim board has been added to the lower edge of the soffit as a valance to shade the glare and keep the light directed down toward the layout.
- Color Temperature of the lights. Before LEDs it was common to use either incandescent (around 2700K color temp, very yellow) or fluorescent (color temp varies, but often has a greenish cast). LEDs allow us to choose the color temperature so that our layouts will look more natural. But what color is natural? Daylight is often said to be 5000-6500K. This gets a little too blue for some folks. A better choice is 4000K – it's not too blue and seems easier on the eyes. But this is another item of personal choice – it's your railroad!

Windows

Some modelers do not want a train room with windows. If that's you, then you simply need to cover the windows in some fashion. One solution is paper or fabric pleated blinds which don't need pull cords. These are available in blackout designs and multiple colors. They are relatively inexpensive and you might even find a color that matches the blue in your backdrop. The F&N had a choice to build out the train room with or without windows. In the end a single 9" by 48" window was installed high on one wall. Management at the F&N found it a little more pleasing to be in a room with at least a little natural light.

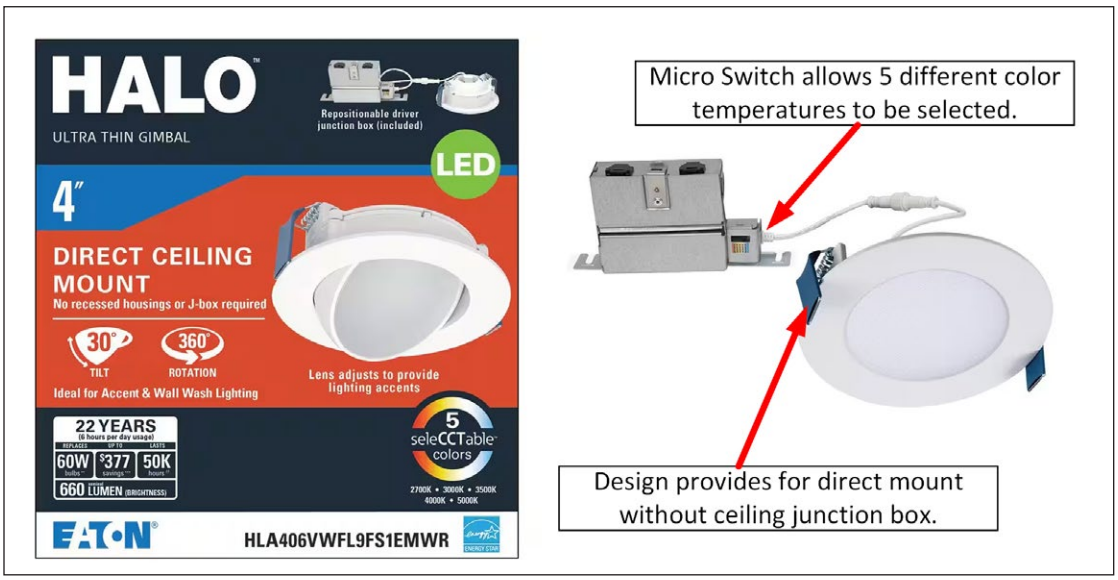

Figure 10: Lighting on the F&N is provided by LED light fixtures recessed into the ceiling. These lights are from Home Depot and are easy to add to an existing home. There are other versions that allow color temperature to be changed as desired using a remote control. That would be useful if you want to change the lighting: for example, from mid-day to late afternoon. These lights are also dimmable so that you can create a twilight look for your layout.

Wall Colors

If you can get away with painting the train room walls, you'll enjoy the result. The F&N painted the lower walls (below the ledger) a brown-gray earth color that complements the colors that will be used on the fascia and the base color of the layout surface. Above the ledger is the same Vast Sky that is the base color of backdrop. The ceiling was left white to reflect more light back down to the layout.

Room Temperature

While the room may have been adequately ventilated before it became a train room, it may not be when multiple people are in the room looking at your layout or for an operating session. Consider what you may need, such as a new, larger ceiling fan, or under layout floor fans to circulate air. If you add a fan under the layout, remember to look for one that is specifically designed to be quiet.

Electrical Needs

If your layout is the size of a spare bedroom or smaller, then you will probably be fine with the power available at the electric outlets. If you are doing some remodeling, you can have a dedicated outlet installed with a wall switch to control it. This outlet can be used for your DCC system and a small booster. It allows you to "turn off" the entire layout from a single switch.

When building larger layouts you'll need to determine the amount of amps available at the electrical outlets in the room and compare this to the amperage draw from the DCC system, boosters, turnout motors, etc. Remember that the outlets in the room may be sharing a circuit with other rooms, so any other amperage draw need to be considered as well.

When thinking of electrical needs also think of Electrical safety. You should always ground 110V electrical equipment including transformers and DCC boosters. Use a master switch to ensure all power is disconnected from the layout when not in use. Even DCC equipment that is malfunctioning can get hot enough to start a fire. Finally, don't overload electrical circuits and don't connect multiple surge protectors or power strips together. If an electrical plug is getting hot or a breaker keeps tripping, turn off the power and figure out the problem.

With the ledger, backdrop, and the train room prep completed it's time to start the "foundation" for our layout – the benchwork. Join us next quarter when we look at some twists on the familiar benchwork designs. You'll find a few tips and tricks that will make you a happy model railroader! **ML**

Figure 11: The backdrop and train room modifications have been completed and benchwork can now move forward. Next quarter we will look at benchwork construction with some tips and tricks borrowed from wooden boat construction. We'll also answer the question: Why in the world are there legs on that very narrow benchwork instead of shelf brackets?

Historian's Corner

Our Lone Star Region Heritage

by Bob Barnett, MMR
with guest author Darrell Cowles

The Texas Western Model Railroad Club

This issue we are fortunate to have a guest author. Darrell Cowles, former Director of the Lone Star Region and Life-time member of the Texas Western has provided a detailed history of the famed Texas Westen and provided links to many photos. We appreciate Darrell taking the time to prepare the history and hope to get similar contribution from other LSR clubs.

-Bob

Background and History

The Texas Western Model Railroad Club was formed in 1996 by a group of railroad modelers meeting in the spare warehouse area of Joe Williams Compressor Service at 6807 Anglin Drive, Fort Worth. This group of modelers had primarily been active in other modular-type railroad clubs in the area, but now they were looking for a permanent place to build a layout with excellent track, beautiful scenery, and prototypical operations. Through the interest and generosity of Joe Williams and his family we were offered the use of the warehouse in which to build our HO/HOn3 scale empire.

The model railroad was begun with a membership of about 14 people and work was primarily done on Thursday and Saturday nights. A committee was formed to create a track plan that roughly approximated the Southwest area including Colorado, New Mexico, and Texas with Fort Worth being focused upon in particular. This track plan was created to emulate the prototypical daily operations of real railroads as they served the country in the 1950's and to allow for interesting model operation sessions in the future.

After only a few months, trains were running on limited track with minimal scenery, but they were running! Within a couple of years this first room was approaching completion with 8' high mountains, raging rivers, and long west Texas prairies for the trains to traverse in their voyages. The mountains had 3' narrow gauge tracks climbing them and delivering goods.

At this time, we again formulated additional track plans and moved into a larger room expanding the layout to almost 3,000 square feet! While this is among the larger model railroads in the Southwest, our gracious host Joe Williams added another 400 square feet of space in 2002 to accommodate our version of Houston and its ports.

During this early time the Texas Western Model Railroad Club had been content to be just a hobby and a source of pride for its members. However, we found that our visitors were overwhelmed at the scope and quality of the miniature railroad and marveled at the accurate prototypical details that abound throughout the layout. They asked many questions about why the railroad did certain things, and marveled at the re-creation of the Art Deco Texas & Pacific passenger station, freight station, and U.S. Post Office as well as many other buildings. We found ourselves in the role of historians and educators during Open House events, explaining details about the importance that railroads played in the development of Fort Worth and the surrounding areas. What we discovered was the lack of knowledge of many people when it came to the contributions the railroads of the Twentieth Century made in our country. As a result of this revelation, we decided in 2007 to pursue recognition of our organization as a non-profit educational and historical entity. We are currently listed in the State of Texas as a non-profit organization, and effective as of November 2006 were recognized by the Internal Revenue Service as a 501(c)3 non-profit as well.

We decided upon a Mission Statement to summarize our future endeavors: "To construct and operate a prototypical miniature railroad preserving the historical significance of the American railroads in Texas, especially in the Southwest surrounding Fort Worth. This railroad will be utilized to educate the public and preserve the technology, operations, life styles, and impact of railroads as a transportation system and builder of the Southwest."

We were featured in the November of 2006 program Texas Country Reporter with Bob Phillips, the Fort Worth Star-Telegram for the past 3 years announcing our annual public Open House, and in the Forest Hills News, November 2008 edition. We have also been featured in the model railroad magazine The Cowcatcher, in a feature story by Tim Blackwell. In an effort to educate further, we have participated in the "Eyes of North Texas" radio program with Adell Campbell. This program reaches vision impaired listeners across the North Texas area through special radio programming.

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GREYHOUND
Darrell Cowles

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PHOTOGRAPHY

Darrell Coules

The Texas Western has also opened its doors to the public on Saturday evenings during November since 2006 to celebrate "National Model Railroad Month." We have had no less than 1,500 visitors come through our layout to marvel at our miniature transportation system, and listen to bits of history regarding the railroads. Our members dress in period-correct clothing and act as docents; sharing the importance of railroads in America.

A common tragedy, but with a happy ending this time

After 17 years of building a beautiful layout, the Williams Compressor Service discontinued business after the passing of owner and club member Joe Williams. The property was to be placed for sale, necessitating our relocation. Members searched for possible new locations all around the south and east sides of Fort Worth, many were visited for evaluation.

We were fortunate to find the City of Forest Hill Community Center available for long-term lease with option to purchase. The City of Forest Hill had built a new Civic and Convention Center and no longer needed the older Community Center building. This free-standing building is 4,600 sq. ft. with large meeting area, multi-stall restrooms, ADA compliant, and a full kitchen.

We negotiated a 25-year lease with option to buy, and while this excellent building is not inexpensive to lease, it is one of the nicest club buildings that I have ever seen. Once the lease was secured, we proceeded with removing structures, switches, track, and electronics from the old layout. The beautiful scenery and bench work was then cut up and thrown into a roll-off dumpster. A truly sad day for Texas Western members.

The club membership decided we should become more prototypical with our new layout, and to feature Tower 55 as the focal point; also, we want to model the 7 different railroads that crossed these busy diamonds daily. The time period we selected for this new layout is 1945-1962. This wide backdating was so we could run steam in operations settings; we modelers love steam engines!

A layout design committee was formed, and later presented the club with a footprint, and the basic track plan to build. This new double tier layout will occupy all of the approximately 2,500 sq. ft. of open space in the building and feature two 8' diameter helixes for traveling between levels. Despite having a prototypical crossing at Tower 55, no duckunders were needed. This new layout design also is ADA compliant in anticipation of large visitor numbers in the future, and improved traffic flow through the layout: a valuable lesson learned with the first layout.

In addition, we decided to utilize steel stud construction for the benchwork on this layout to help eliminate the expansion and contraction typical of wood bench work. This new, large layout will be built in three phases, with Phase 1 benchwork currently finished, and about 65% of the scenery also nearing completion.

Operations planning is in process so we can begin to do what real railroads do: work. In 2025, we will start the build out for Phase 2, then again stop to add scenery and structures before tackling the third, and final, phase.

We currently have a fully operational Tower 55 area as the center piece of the layout with true North/South and East/West operations. We will, when completed, be able to represent much of the operations of the Texas & Pacific, MoPac, Santa Fe, Fort Worth & Denver, MKT, Frisco, Southern Pacific, and Frisco in and around Fort Worth. We will effectively model railroad operations from southern Oklahoma to Houston and from east Texas to Abilene.

The future is bright!

The Texas Western Model Railroad Club is a determined survivor among model railroad clubs; many of which sadly fail to rise from the ashes when they lose their original facility. Our members are dedicated to seeing this club not only survive, but become a destination layout for any model railroader and everyone who enjoys seeing history come alive. With the very supportive City of Forest Hill as our landlords, we actively participate in many city events, celebrations, plus have an open house for the public every December. These are always attended and supported by the mayor, past mayors, city Council people, and the City Manager. We actively work fund-raisers such as train shows and hold "garage sales" at the club to sell items that have been donated to our non-profit. We are financially secure, and intent on remaining that way!

The future is indeed very bright for the Texas Western Model Railroad Club! Come join us!

Darrell Cowles
Lifetime Member, Texas Western Model Railroad Club

ML

Board of Directors Meeting Notes

MINUTES OF THE LONE STAR REGION BOARD MEETING
Meeting held via Zoom
May 15, 2025

The Annual Mid-Year Board Meeting was called to order by President Donna Orr at 8:02pm.

Attendance

All officers, directors, and committee chairs were present except:

Voting Board Members:
Charles Goodrich, Division 3 Director
Proxy: None
Don Kimmell, Division 7 Director
Proxy: Peter Kazmir
Phil Stewart, Director 8 Director
Proxy: Steve Sandifer
Michael Harang, Director At Large
Proxy: None
Gene Mangum, Director At Large
Proxy: Steve Sandifer

Non-Voting Board Members:
Duane Richardson, MMR, Achievements Chair
Jared Roberts, Membership Chair
Riley Triggs, Publicity Chair

Motion 1: Reading and Approval of Previous Meeting's Minutes

Peter Kazmir provided a motion, and Chuck Lind, MMR seconded, to dispense with the reading of the minutes of the January 2025 Board of Directors meeting and to approve as published in the March 2025 Marker Lamp. The motion passed unopposed.

Board Reports

Reports were provided by all officers, directors, and committee chairs except for Ray Byer, Phil Stewart, Gene Mangum, Bill Dryden, and Chuck Lind.

One correction was made by Joe Leising; his report said he had already uploaded Convention information onto the Shared Drive on Google, but he's having some challenges and it will be delayed a few days.

Officer Reports are as follows:

President - Donna Orr

Printed on page 3 of this issue of the Marker Lamp

Vice President - Ray Byer

No report received

Treasurer - Steve Sandifer

Fiscal 2023-2024	
$19,016.30	**Beginning Balance**
$15,085.15	BofA Checking Account
$5,155.25	BofA CD
$10,281.55	BofA CD
$10,281.55	BofA CD
$15,422.32	BofA CD
$226.50	Restricted rebate funds, Div 7
$448.86	Restricted Funds, Bob Clark Award
$578.00	Restricted Funds, Delattre Fund
$1,253.36	**Liabilities**
$18,987.04	**Unrestricted Checking for LSR**
$41,140.67	**CD Investment**
$60,127.71	**Total Unrestricted Funds For LSR**

Secretary / Publications Chair - Peter Kazmir

My report remains similar to the one I gave in January. Several projects are underway to the benefit of the LSR. We are building a convention website that can be used by all LSR conventions

going forward with minimal effort on the host committees' parts, and we are planning both a new LSR website and the new museum website. When those projects are "finished" we will then be working on an overhaul to how the Marker Lamp is assembled and published to make it much easier, faster, and more collaborative.

I'm also happy to report that the Marker Lamp continues to be published on schedule and emails are being sent within the agreed-upon time frames.

I do, however, want to point out that while we do have a good set of content in the Marker Lamp each issue, we could do better with more contributions from folks across the LSR. Directors are asked to encourage their Division members to submit content.

Chair Reports are in the following section of the *Marker Lamp*, starting on page 47.

Old Business

Opening Address by LSR President Donna Orr

Donna reported she may not be able to attend the convention in Baton Rouge due to the lack of a pet/house sitter (but she's still looking). As a result, she announced the President's Award winner now, and Bob will award it at the convention.

Report on Financial Audit

Steve reported no changes to the audit that was submitted. Chuck Lind and Dick Brennan served as the auditors. No irregularities were found. (Audit report available in the Google Drive.)

Convention Website

Work is in progress on the new standard convention website, but it was not in a state where it could be demoed in the meeting. We are on track to have at least the pages that will be needed in June (if not more) live by the end of the convention. Peter is the webmaster for the 2026 convention so that will make it easier to debug and streamline its use. Peter will be writing a document on how to use the website for future conventions.

Donna asked about the hosting logistics. We can host multiple convention websites simultaneously, but we'll need to consider the URLs ahead of time. Peter will report back on that.

Virtual Museum

Donna will continue to help Bob with the Museum after she leaves office as President. Bob is looking for more input from the Dallas area. Dick Brannan reported that Division 1 has an extensive history (for the Fort Worth area) on their website which we can use, but we could potentially use more especially for older model railroaders and other subjects.

Peter reported that there has been no progress on the website, since all our attention has been on the convention website. But it will go faster than the convention website since it will use the same tools.

Both websites (convention and museum) will be managed by the web chair once they're up and running. They will both be on the new host, Dreamhost.

Directory

Chuck has finished assembling the directory, and he will be sending information for how folks can access it to Peter. 123 folks have sent information, but only 42 have sent photos. Chuck will attempt to get more photos. The photos need to be headshots, not an avatar or some other pose, since the purpose is to let other folks know what the person looks like. Only members of the directory will be able to access the directory.

We may send another mass email asking for folks to join. Plus we'll continue to run an 'ad' in the Marker Lamp. We may also do some publicity at the LSR convention.

As a reminder, folks don't need to list their address, only their city and their email address.

LSR Convention Guide

Joe is pleased to report the new and improved LSR Convention Guide is complete, and it includes information from the last 15 years of LSR (and the DFW National) Conventions.

Some parts may not apply to every convention. The goal was to include what, when, how, and sometimes why to make it as user-friendly to a host group. It includes, for example, timelines, contract guidelines for hotels and transportation, budgeting, venue selection, and more. It includes worksheets as well.

If anyone has questions (or suggestions to improve the guide), feel free to ask Joe. The Guide will be on the Google Shared Drive.

Roy and Donn will be leading the 2028 convention in the greater San Antonio area and they are already looking at the guide and are finding it useful.

2025 (Baton Rouge) Convention Update

As of the board meeting 74 full rail, 16 spouse, 6 youth, and 2 caboose registrations have been made. There have been 30 operating sessions, 6 of each reserved clinic, and 20 additional banquet tickets sold. The floor plan and other arrangements at the hotel are set.

Speed is coordinating operating sessions. There are three railroads reserved for operating sessions (about 20 slots). Not everyone who has registered for operating sessions has reserved a slot.

A general (or detailed) agenda has not yet been published, but one should be on the website within the next couple of weeks.

There are several layouts participating in the convention, and three of them are in the Covington area. The Crescent City Model Railroad Club is in Metairie (a New Orleans suburb).

It was noted that spouse registrations - which are only $30 - do not include a ticket to the banquet. (It does say this on the website.) Joe is planning on sending out reminders about this and other questions.

Rod announced that they are extending the Early Bird Registration deadline until May 25 (including hotel registration). An email will go out to that effect.

Rod asked how much time the 2026 convention would like during the banquet to make their presentation. Doug said it should take no longer than 15 or 20 minutes.

2026 (Austin) Convention Update

The 2026 convention has all key committee positions filled, and 16 volunteers overall. The volunteers have been very proactive and the committee has been making good progress. The committee has been focused on selecting a venue, with a proposed date of June 18-20, 2026.

After researching locations between San Marcos and Temple, Texas, with prices ranging up to $31,000, the committee has selected the Wyndham Garden Inn, located at I-35 and Woodward Avenue in South Austin. Based on the terms of the tentative contract, the guest room rate will be $96 (negotiated down from $116) with no minimum room-nights required. The function space rental will be $4,200 (negotiated down from $5,400). (The Mayborn Center in Temple was the only venue that offered a lower bid, but layouts and operating sessions are much more plentiful in the Austin area.)

The Wyndham Garden Inn does not have a minimum spend for food or drinks, and does not have catering requirements (an outside caterer can be used). There is no extra charge for using any electrical outlets, and the convention can use their in-house A/V equipment for free.

Some additional benefits are that the hotel bar is co-located with the banquet room, so there's no need for a cash bar at the banquet. The room for the contest and silent auctions will be in separate rooms, each about 1,400 square feet. The smallest clinic room is nearly 1,000 square feet, and the largest clinic room is configured like a lecture hall, with tiered seating.

The committee is looking at tour and non-rail activities across the area. The hotel staff has been extremely responsive and reasonable throughout the entire process so far. Joe has been very helpful with the negotiations.

Motion 2: Approval to Accept 2026 Convention Venue Contract

Doug Taylor made a motion, and Chuck Lind seconded, to accept the contract with the Wyndham Garden Inn for June 18-20, 2026 as negotiated. The motion passed unopposed.

Motion 3: Approval to Award Grant to 2026 Convention

Doug Taylor made a motion, and Roy Kaiser seconded, to have the LSR grant the 2026 convention $2000 per Article V, Section 21 of the LSR bylaws to be used to reduce convention registration fees. The motion passed unopposed.

Doug mentioned he is still looking for additional volunteers from across the region from anyone who would like to help.

Joe commended Doug and the group in the Austin area on how they have quickly mobilized to get the convention planning underway.

Steve asked if a bank account has been established (and one has, by Tom Weaver, the Division and convention

treasurer). The convention committee does not expect to request a loan from the LSR. Doug will have Tom coordinate with Steve to receive payment on the grant.

Old Business

Election Results

The 2025 election results were reviewed:

- Bob Barnett, MMR, is our new President. With this change, Donna Orr becomes Board Advisor as Past President, replacing Past President Chuck Lind. (Chuck remains as Youth Chair.)
- Jeff Rykiel is the new Division 3 Director
- Divisions 1, 5, and 7 re-elected their Directors (Dick Brennan, Brooks Willig, and Don Kimmell, respectively)
- Constitution changes were approved

Motion 4: Ratification of Election Results

Peter Kazmir made a motion, and Doug Taylor seconded, to ratify the results of the 2025 election as listed above. The motion passed unopposed.

The president's email address will be redirected to Bob. Peter will add Jeff to the Google Drive (Bob was already included as Historian). Doug Taylor will also be added to the Google Drive, as he wasn't added when he took over Division 4 from Bob.

Motion 5: Proclamation to Change Bank Account Access

Doug Taylor made a motion, and Peter Kazmir seconded, to write a proclamation of the election results requesting the LSR bank remove Donna Orr and add Bob Barnett to/from our account(s). The motion passed unopposed.

Peter will write the proclamation and send it to Steve, who will work with the bank and Bob to make the changes.

Motion 6: Deletion of Election Ballots

Peter Kazmir made a motion, and Rod Fredericks seconded, to delete the electronic ballots from the 2025 election. The motion passed unopposed.

Speed reports the website has been updated to reflect the election results.

Budget Proposal

Steve reviewed the budget proposal for 2025-26 (available in the Google Drive). The proposal is a bit more detailed than in the past, and includes the requests from the various chairs that made one (not everyone did).

Motion 7: 2025-26 Budget

Ray Byer made a motion, and Doug Taylor seconded, to adopt the 2025-26 budget as proposed. The motion passed unopposed.

Closing Remarks by new President Bob Barnett

Bob remarked that growing up in Division 3, and living as an adult in Division 4, Division 8, and Division 2, he's happy to represent the entire Region. We have a great hobby and great modelers across the Region, and he's excited to keep things going.

Motion 8: Meeting Adjourment

Donna Orr provided a motion, and Roy Kaiser seconded, to adjourn the meeting. The motion passed unopposed, and the meeting was adjourned at 9:05 pm.

A Zoom recording of the meeting is available in the LSR's Google Drive at https://drive.google.com/file/d/1muc8p436O0M3edq53T7wlYVgAoojSAfC/view?usp=sharing

Director and Department Reports

Cowcatcher Division 1

by Dick Brannan
director@cowcatcherdivision.org

cowcatcherdivision.com

The Cowcatcher Division participated in the Train-A-Plooza convention in early March. This is held annually by the Lone Star Hi-Railers at the Grapevine Convention Center in early March. We manned a membership booth at the convention, which attracts about 1400 paid attendees, and we were able to sign-up two new NMRA members for Division 1 and make a new member referral to Division 5.

For our April and May meeting the Division is doing a "Make and Take" of a Freight House. It is a laser cut kit done by Duane Richardson and detail parts were 3-D printed by Cole Rash. The building is very versatile and used for a variety of structures along the "right of way". There are about 35 members participating in this "Make a Take" and I would not be surprised if a kit or two showed up at the Blues Express Convention.

Dick Brannan
Director – Cowcatcher Division

Bayou Division 2

by Rod Fredericks
fredericks.rod@gmail.com

With the Blues Express 2025 NMRA \ LSR convention rapidly approaching, all hands here are working hard to make it a success. As of today (13 May) we have 75 rails registrations, 16 non-rails and 6 youths.

Chuck Lind has put together a fantastic list of clinicians, a number of which are from other regions. Most are already posted on the Convention web page. The list should be finalized by early next week.

Work on the TimeTable and other Convention literature is also underway.

In an area short on home layouts I've managed to pull together two self-drive layout tours. One is the Greater Baton Rouge Railroad Modelers. (See the article that appeared in a recient Marker Lamp and republished on the convention web site.) This is a large facility 45 minutes north of the Convention hotel with over seven layouts indoors and out G-scale and live steam, to N-scale and even a little Z-gauge. This open house is schelded for Saturday 1:00 to 4:oo pm.

My layout will also be open, but I am not sure when yet because I con't know when I can get away from the hotel. I'll also probably open it up on Sunday at 8:00 am for anyone wanting to stop by on the way home.

The other big layout tour is the Triangle Tour to the Covington area (3 layouts) and to the New Orleans are (Crescent City Model Railroad Club). The article on this tour will be published in full in the June Marker Lamp.

Trinity River Division 3

by Charles Goodrich, MMR
director@cowcatcherdivision.org

trinityriverdivision.org

Division 3 has been using its new audio/visual media for about 6 months. It has added a lot to our meeting with good sound and stunning visual impact. One negative is that the equipment is complicated to set up resulting in most meetings starting late. The AV team is building cases for the equipment that are pre wired allowing for minimal set up time. This should greatly reduce setup time. We still need additional volunteers to learn the set up procedure so that the current crew can occasionally have a rest.

Attendance has been good with levels about the same as before the pandemic. Still needed are younger members to attend the meetings.

Our meetings have had a high volume of participation in our Show and Tell segment. Some of these were like a mini clinic in substance and were very informative.

Division 3 has had several good clinics this period.

The January clinic was presented by Jeff Palmer. The clinic was titled "Static Grass". Jeff told us how to apply static grass to our layouts. Static grass is one of the best ways to represent tall grasses in our miniature world.

The February clinic was presented by Thomas Stephens. His clinic was titled "Introduction to Operation". Thomas told us how to operate our model railroad in a prototype way.

The March clinic was presented by Steve Sandifer. The clinic was titled "Traditional Livestock Operations" and was an overview of the transport of livestock, with emphasis on the Santa Fe Railway. Steve presented the clinic via Zoom.

The April clinic was presented by Vic McTee. Vic gave a presentation on Operation Lifesaver.

This is my last report as Division 3 Director. Jeff Rykiel will be assuming the Directorship of D3 at the board meeting on May 15th. I have enjoyed being the director for the last four years. Of course, there have been challenges but there are always people willing to help. In all I feel that it has been a successful four years. I will miss the interaction with the leaders of Division 3 as well as the LSR board. Although I will miss all of you, it will be nice just working on my model railroad. Thank you all for your friendship and support.

Cen-Tex Division 4

by Doug Taylor
director@centexnmra.org

centexnmra.org

After volunteering to be the Division Director I was unsure of what to expect. Then learning that we were hosting the regional convention in 2026 I had no idea if we could pull it off. That was all just a few short months ago. Since then I have discovered that Division 4 is full of rock stars! I put out a call for volunteers to help organize the convention and immediately had 16 members step up to the plate. While not every possible position has been filled yet, every month seems to add more who are willing to help out. While the support within the Division has been outstanding, we still have room if anyone else in the LSR would like to contribute their time and knowledge. Because of this we are on track to pull together a great convention.

The committee has been having bi-weekly meetings so that we can keep everyone up to date on progress as well as to iron out some smaller details. The meetings are expected to become more frequent the closer we get to the event. Already completed was a competitive process to select our location to include on-site visits of the 2 finalists with multiple committee members (shout out to Joe Leising for his valuable assistance with the RFPs!). We have selected our venue based on costs, date availability, function spaces and banquet seating concerns. In addition the committee has just about finalized a name and theme for the convention. We have a number of items in work that should allow everyone who attends to have a great experience.

While all of this is going on the Division is also planning a fall event to celebrate the NMRA 90th Anniversary. I will be providing more details on this in the near future as they become firmer. We have had a number of members offer to do clinics at our meetings to share their knowledge with the Division, as well as quite a few showing their amazing layouts during layout tours. At our meetings we also have time set aside for members to bring in projects they are working on to show the membership. There have been some excellent models shown and the Q&A after each is presented is informative to all.

As we move forward I see nothing but good things to come for the Division. I would also like to invite anyone who would like to attend our meetings, either in person or by Zoom, to just send me your email address and I'll be happy to add you to the mailing list. Our next meeting will be July 12.

West Texas Division 5

by Brooks Willig
Headroadie2004@gmail.com

Newsletter

As we continue to host our monthly Zoom meetings, I've found that securing presenters willing to speak for an hour or more has become increasingly time-consuming. While we've enjoyed some excellent clinics in the past, it's clear that not every meeting requires a formal speaker to be successful. In fact, during a few recent meetings without a scheduled clinician, we were able to hold lively and engaging discussions among ourselves that lasted nearly two hours.

In light of this, I plan to introduce a new meeting format beginning with our May meeting. The goal of this format is to foster greater participation from Division members, offer a variety of topics, and keep the meetings engaging without relying on a single presenter.

The new format will include several short segments, each focused on a specific theme. I will prepare material for some segments in advance to ensure we always have something to discuss, even if no one volunteers content that month. The segments will include:

1. **Division and Regional Updates** - A brief highlight of upcoming Division and Regional events. These are already detailed in our monthly newsletter, so this segment will be kept short to conserve time.
2. **Trivia Time** - A quick bit of railroad-related trivia or an interesting fact from the hobby to spark interest and discussion.
3. **New and Noteworthy Products** - A look at up to three new or interesting product announcements that may be of interest to modelers.
4. **Prototype History Spotlight** - A short history presentation on a topic related to prototype railroading. This could be a specific railroad, location, or historical event.
5. **Modeling Tips and Tricks** - An opportunity for members to share techniques, tools, or strategies that make modeling more enjoyable or efficient.
6. **What's On Your Bench?** - A show-and-tell style segment where members can share current projects, progress, and questions. This is a great chance to seek advice or simply inspire others.

I believe this new structure will be a refreshing departure from the traditional hour-long lecture format and will help reinvigorate our virtual gatherings. It's my hope that it will encourage more members to participate and contribute each month, strengthening the sense of community within our Division.

As we move forward, we will continue to refine the format based on feedback to keep it fresh, flexible, and fun.

NMRA LSR Division 5 meets on the third Monday of each month at 7:00 PM (Central Time). Meetings are held entirely online using Zoom.

To receive meeting announcements, reminders, the Zoom link, and other Division updates, please sign up at the following link: http://eepurl.com/hRLLm9

Brooks Willig
Division 5 Director

South Texas Division 6

by Roy Kaiser
fr8train@gvtc.com

Division 6 is still on course with our bi-monthly meetings on the second Saturday of the even months. While we have seen a small decline in the number of attendees, our participants continue to enjoy and actively participate in all activities. Several attempts have failed to identify a reason for the attendance drop other than ongoing conflicts with other interests and family affairs.

Don Winn, MMR recently conducted an off-site "Make N' Take" session on kitbashing plastic structures using both Walthers and DPM Modulars. He held the session at the newest Hobby Town location in San Antonio. While there were fewer attendees than planned, their responses were all filled with high praise for Don and a general theme of thorough enjoyment by all. Don is already working on another such project for the near future.

At our last meeting, Robert Thomas' 10-minute Modeling Tips were especially rewarding. Robert presented some very detailed information on the free photo editing software, GIMP. He demonstrated several ways to improve focus, depth of field and lighting.

After the meeting, we were treated to a home layout tour of Ray Phillip's very large home HO layout which now features a fully operational signaling system. Ray also hosted an Operating Session the following Sunday and a great time was had by all.

We are constantly striving to provide our members with a diverse program that not only covers all aspects of railroad modeling but also gives them a taste of the real thing.

North Louisiana Division 7

by Don Kimmell
elf4kcs@me.com

Not too much to report. Membership has held steady.

Dr. Colvin is moving along with his new building to house and operate his "new" layout. More to come.

The Shreveport Railroad Museum has moved their train Day festival back to October, from May. Scheduling issues. They have expanded their downtown Shreveport model railroad now that they have "better" A/C. Stop by some time.142 North Common Street. They are located with the old water works of Shreveport, which is also worth the visit. In the past, this event has presented a recruiting opportunity, as they provide a free table for OI Presentations, which then "shares" the space with NMRA/LSR.

A gentleman north of Shreveport, actually outside of Logansport, has opened an Event Center with a railroad focus. He has been buying/moving (he has the equipment) old Cabooses for housing, etc…should be interesting.

Speaking of old equipment, the Shreveport Railroad Museum has a EMD 88 tonner they are looking to unload, no room for it. Interested contact the Museum (318) 221-3388.

Texas Gulf Division 8

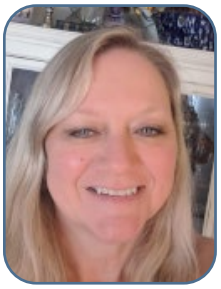
by Phil Stewart
pstewart1225@yahoo.com

texasgulfdivision.org

2025 saw a new place for Division 8 to meet and new clinics. We started out 2025 with an outstanding clinic by one of the great modelers in the U.S., Pete Leach, MMR. Pete did an innovative clinic on organizing your achievement awards. Pete followed up with a March clinic on transportation of automobiles over the past century by rail. Pete comes from the automotive industry and his insights were extremely valuable. We just don't realize how much knowledge and experience in modelling exists in our division. Our goal is to bring that knowledge and experience to our members.

Our May clinic featured another MMR, Kelly Russell who did an excellent program on Operations. We have long advocated doing clinics trying to show the diversity of model railroading.

Director At-Large



by Deborah Gifford
gifforddeborah5@gmail.com

Thanks to everyone for your participation in the elections, which were a success.

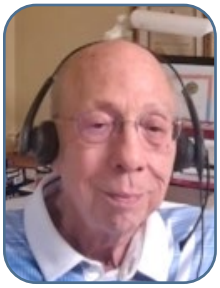
Director At-Large

by Michael Harang
miharang@gmail.com

Hello All LSR Members. Please look for my report on German Rail Transportation in upcoming issues of the Marker Lamp. My family and I are spending two weeks in May 2025 traveling in Bavaria, Germany. I am writing this short report from the city of Regensburg.

Prost aus Regensburg
Cheers from Regensburg

Director At-Large



by Gene Mangum
semangum@windstream.net

(No report received.)

Achievement Program

by Duane Richardson, MMR
LSR Achievement Chair
pinecreekstation@verizon.net

(No report received)

Contests

by Ray Byer
LSR Contest Chair
raybyer@yahoo.com

(No report received)

Conventions

by Joe Leising
LSR Conventions Chair
joe@leising.com

The last few months for LSR Conventions have been busy. The Blues Express 2025 will soon be here, with a train load of fun for everyone. If you have not already done so, register today at www.BluesExpress2025.com.

As soon as Doug Tylor, the new Cen-Tex Division Director, learned that his division was hosting the 2026 annual convention, he and his members immediately went into high-gear making plans for the LSR convention, and forming the convention committee. Dates and venue have been determined, and the nearly complete convention committee has started making plans.

I have made an introduction to Jeff Rykiel, the incoming Trinity River Division Director, and we will soon be discussing the arrangements for the 2027 LSR convention.

An updated Convention Planning Guide has been completed, covering every possible aspect of hosting a convention, time frame lists to complete assignments, and information when negotiating hotel and tour bus contracts. In addition to the Planning Guide, various worksheets are available on the LSR Google Drive to assist with venue selection to convention activities.

Education

by Don Winn, MMR
LSR Education Chair
donswinn@gmail.com

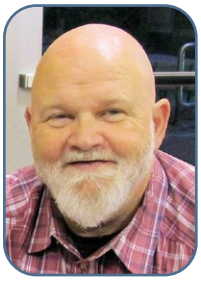
I hope to see all y'all at our regional convention at the end of this month!!! There is still time to make plans and get registered. It will be held June 26-29 in Baton Rouge.

Education takes many forms, but often is the result of something you read or hear. In my clinic, I will discuss how YOU too can be an educator, writing articles and delivering clinics about this fantastic hobby we all enjoy.

I hope to see you at the Blues Express in Baton Rouge!

IF YOU SEE SOMETHING,
SAY SOMETHING.
TELL A COP OR WRITE AN ARTICLE
OR PRESENT A CLINIC. COME ON, IT'S EASY
Taking steps towards earning your Author AP certificate

Events



by Bill Dryden
LSR Events Chair
bdr149@airmail.net

Not a lot of change to report. This past year has basically been the same as last report.

Remember, folks, I rely on YOU to keep me informed; I will make concerted attempts to get your information correct. I prepare the "Up the Tracks" column from what has been passed on to me from the various Divisions and Clubs within the LSR. If your Division blurb (or one of a Club's within your Division) has incorrect information or needs updating, please pass that information on to me so I can update the information correctly. And, if your club/organization has a web page, I will typically drop by to see if I spot anything new or different from my previous information.

Still "fighting" the research part; several of the "old standby" sources have dropped off-line; have found a couple of new sources. I typically will visit the web site for each published event to assure that the site is still active and provides the reader with needed information concerning the respective show.

Overall, I believe I am keeping up with the known events within our Region. ALL submittals are greatly appreciated.

Anyone having events and/or corrections to be published, please send me the details: bdr149@airmail.net

A reminder to all: Please consider our deadlines for submittals and publications to allow adequate lead time to correctly announce your event – Column submission deadlines are the 15th of February, May, August and November; publication of the Marker Lamp is the middle of the following month.

Historian

by Bob Barnett, MMR
LSR Historian
rbarnettmopac@gmail.com

Our efforts continue to gather data and photos regarding the history of the LSR and model railroading in the Lone Star Region. Recently we have concentrated on clubs around the LSR. Clubs play an important role in promoting the hobby and getting in new modelers. Several clubs around the region are or have been all NMRA clubs in the past. So far, I have a comprehensive history of the San Jacinto Model Railroad Club in Houston, an early day history of the Houston Society of Model Engineers, and an excellent history of the Texas Western Model Railroad Club in Fort Worth prepared by Darrell Cowles, a long-time member there.

A reasonably complete history can be obtained from the various clubs' websites, but I would prefer a more complete and detailed history written by a long-time club member. Some club histories in the works:

- **SAMRA** - The San Antonio Model Railroad Association-I have several old friends who are long-time SAMRA members so we are hitting them up to put together a history.
- **Texas Northern Model Railroad Club** in Dallas (actually Plano) - During a recent visit to this club Steel Craver gave a verbal history. It is not exactly the Texas Northern Club I remember visiting in the 1980's in Oak Cliff. It has moved a couple of times and combined with another club to become the present prominent club.
- **The Cowtown Model Railroad Club** in Fort Worth - This club is the linear descendent of the General Dynamics Model Railroad Club, a large and prominent club in Fort Worth that had a large display and operations-based layout in the General Dynamics Recreation facility in southwest Fort Worth for many years. I need a contact in that club who can write a history or provide the information on the club history.
- **All Points North Model Railroad Club** in Conroe - Conroe was considered a separate city 40 miles north of Houston when I moved there in 1977. Now it is not even the farthest northern suburb. This is a large club and layout that actually owns their own building and grounds. They serve a large area of northern Houston.

Numerous other clubs exist around the LSR and need documentation:

- The Austin Model Railway Society
- The Crescent Model Railroad Club in the New Orleans Area
- The Mid-South Model Railroad Club in Baton Rouge
- The group in Shreveport that has moved and is rebuilding Richard Kamm's Sue Line Railroad
- The Amarillo Model Railroad Club
- The Lubbock Model Railroad Club

…and I am sure there are many others missing from the list above. If you know of others let me know and if you have a contact with the club, even better!!

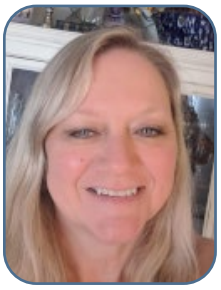
Membership

by Jared Roberts
LSR Membership Chair
jlroberts0418@gmail.com

No rerails, but two deceased this month.

	2024								2025				
Division	**May**	**Jun**	**Jul**	**Aug**	**Sep**	**Oct**	**Nov**	**Dec**	**Jan**	**Feb**	**Mar**	**Apr**	**May**
One	178	180	178	172	168	167	172	166	171	166	167	164	160
Two	82	85	84	83	83	83	84	84	81	81	81	82	84
Three	191	190	189	178	175	167	166	166	171	173	171	168	166
Four	124	127	129	130	132	131	128	124	129	128	126	126	129
Five	28	30	30	29	29	29	28	27	28	30	28	27	28
Six	74	76	76	76	75	72	76	77	75	77	74	74	73
Seven	22	21	21	21	21	21	21	21	22	23	22	22	23
Eight	199	194	193	199	200	198	195	192	194	194	193	197	196
LSR Total	**898**	**903**	**900**	**888**	**883**	**868**	**870**	**857**	**871**	**872**	**862**	**860**	**859**

Nominations/Elections



by Deborah Gifford
LSR Nominations Chair
gifforddeborah5@gmail.com

Thanks to everyone for your participation in the elections, which were a success.

Non-Rail

by Divina Gato-Hogno
LSR Non-Rail Chair
d.gatohogno@gmail.com

(No report received)

Youth

by Chuck Lind, MMR
LSR Youth Chair
chucklind46@gmail.com

(No report received.)

Web

by Gert "Speed" Muller
LSR Web Chair
lsrwebchair@huntatrophy.com

The Lonestarregion.com website is still up and running with hosting services paid through the middle of December 14th.

The new National Membership System at Association Sphere is getting ready to go live, but we won't be using it for Conventions in the next 2 years (yet).

The *Marker Lamp* is being added to the website as it is released. The newly elected officers are shown on the web, and will replace the prior leaders when the board approves the election results. (Thank you to those who served their terms.) The Convention Planning Guide and the LSR By-Laws are also posted on the website as amended within the last year.

In the Division sections of the website, there is plenty of space to show off or link to some websites for layouts in our Divisions, so please send something we can display on those pages.

Run some more trains!

Speed Muller
LSR Web Chair

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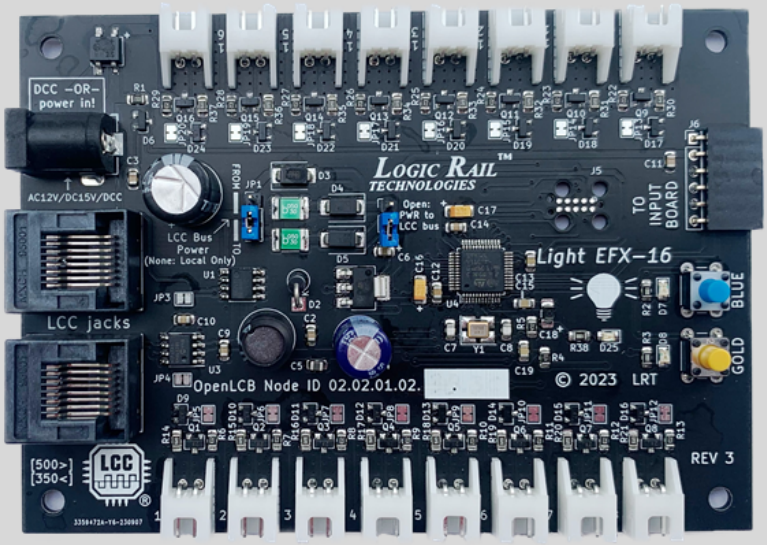
Steve Sandifer
steve.sandifer@sbcglobal.net

Light EFX-16



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Peter Kazmir Photo - Chuck Ellis' Layout

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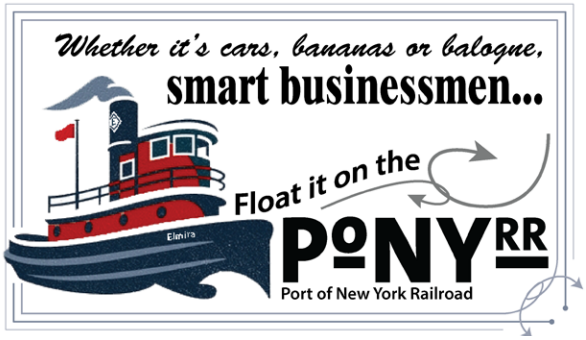
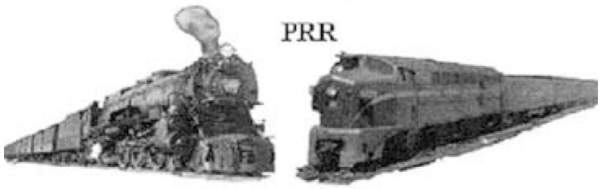
469-964-8571
Georgetown, Texas
bdlr149@airmail.net
Life Member NMRA & LSR



Riley Triggs | ponyrr.blogspot.com

THE ALLEGHENY RAILROAD
HORSESHOE CURVE
ALTOONA



Jerry Schoenberg
Carrollton, Texas (972) 242-9053
arrjerry@aol.com

Pennsylvania Railroad
Laurel Valley Secondary

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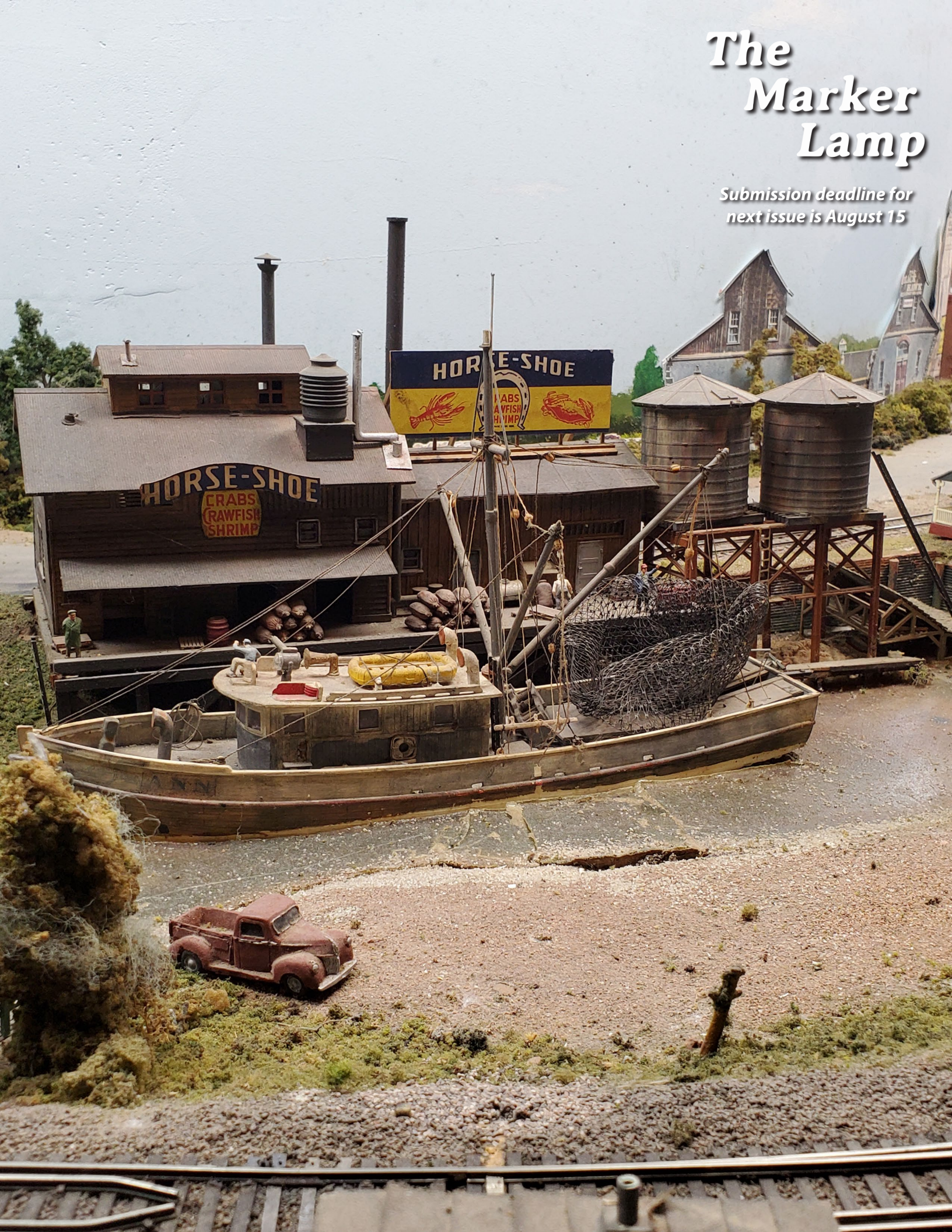

The Marker Lamp

Submission deadline for next issue is August 15